



“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Lund University



*Institutul
Limbii Române*

Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest

SWEDISH JOURNAL OF ROMANIAN STUDIES

Vol. 8 No 2 (2025)



ISSN 2003-0924

The cover photo was taken by Gabriela Chiciudean on July, 4th, 2021 and represents mountain rhododendrons at Șureanu Peak, Alba County, Romania

The editorial activities undertaken by Associate Editor Lucian Vasile Bâgiu for this issue included a visit to *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University, Bucharest, Romania, which was partially funded through Order no. 4067/28.03.2024 issued by the Romanian Ministry of Education, and a training programme to *Charles* University in Prague, Czechia, which was funded by Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), through PN-IV-P2-2.2-MC-2024-0071, contract MC 261 from 22/11/2024.

SWEDISH JOURNAL OF ROMANIAN STUDIES

Vol. 8 No 2 (2025)

ISSN 2003-0924

Table of contents

Editorial	6
Introduction for contributors to Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies	8
Literature	
<i>Cristina Mirela Nicolaescu,</i> George Bacovia. A touchstone of Romanian symbolist poetry	11
<i>Laith Ibrahim,</i> Roman et Histoire : de la condamnation à la justification / Novel and History: from condemnation to justification	21
<i>Gabriela Chiciudean,</i> Lizoanca, wounds and cruel reality	31
<i>Lucian Vasile Bâgiu,</i> Dacians, Varangians, Vlachs and The Golden Bough	42
Translation Studies	
<i>Simona Ailenii,</i> A expressão do poder. Marcas linguístico-estilísticas dos testemunhos da tradução dos textos medievais ocidentais / Lexicon of power. Linguistic-stylistic features of the testimonies of the translation of western medieval texts	66
Cultural Studies	
<i>Laura Lazăr Zăvăleanu,</i> « Renouvelons l’homme intérieur ». Un modèle de politique sociale et culturelle : l’humanisme hésychaste / “Let us renew the inner man”. A model of social and cultural policy: Hesychast Humanism	95
<i>Gabriela Hluşcu, Marius-Mircea Crişan,</i> From Lugos to Hollywood: Bela Lugosi’s transnational persona and the aural construction of Dracula in Tod Browning’s <i>Dracula</i> (1931)	109
<i>Arleen Ionescu, Dumitru Tucan,</i> Representations of the Romanian Holocaust in testimonial literature and films: from trivialization, denial to working through the past (part 2)	119
Anthropology	
<i>Mária Szikszai,</i> Small religious images as instruments of social interaction. An analysis of holy cards based on a Căpleni collection	146

History

Ela Cosma,

Customary law of Central and Southeast Europe in medieval and early modern times. A comparative approach and a few South Slav, German, Transylvanian Saxon, Hungarian, Vlach and Romanian enactments 168

Victor V. Vizauer,

Diplomatic relations between France and Principality of Transylvania in the mid-16th century and the alliance project of 1558 191

Attila Varga,

The German Freemason settlers and the development of Freemasonry in Banat in the 18th and 19th centuries 207

Linguistics

Gabriel-Dan Bărbuleț,

Fostering effective cross-cultural communication through cooperative learning. A pragmatic approach to the cooperative principle 217

Education

Elena Meștereagă, Daniel Dejica,

Exploring out-of-class contexts in EFL learning: Romanian high school students' perspectives and practices 229

Book reviews

Emmanuel Blaise Tapon,

Hăisan D. (2022). *A study of Retranslation and Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 275 p. 241

Diana Alexandra Avram Șandru,

Romanian women writers' voices in exile. Insights from *Un Dicționar al Exilului Feminin Românesc: Autoare Emblematice, Volume Reprezentative* [A dictionary of Romanian women writers' literary exile: Emblematic authors, representative works] coordinated by Emanuela Ilie 246

Contributors 259

The Editorial Board of *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies* used the anti-plagiarism software <https://sistemantiplagiat.ro/> provided by 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania to determine the originality of all manuscripts.

Editorial

The second issue of Volume 8 of the *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies* maintains the publication's tradition of consistently presenting high-quality scholarly articles and reviews on a diverse range of topics related to Romanian culture and its international expansion. Divided into the following sections: literature, translation studies, cultural studies, anthropology, history, linguistics, education, and book reviews, it develops critical perspectives on various aspects of Romanian identity, written in English, French, and Portuguese. The rich linguistic range of the present academic inquiries is owed to the renowned authors from Turkey, Jordan, Canada, and Romania.

The section entitled *Literature* includes four articles discussing themes on symbolist poetry, the genre of the novel, trauma literature, and intertextual elements identified in a twentieth-century Romanian novel. Cristina Mirela Nicolaescu from *Yozgat-Bozok* University, Turkey, explores the poetic message in George Bacovia's works. Laith Ibrahim, from the University of Mutah, Jordan, revises the historical methodology and the theoretical foundations of the novel genre. Gabriela Chiciudean, from *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania, engages the theoretical approach of Cathy Caruth to investigate trauma represented as a wound in the mind in the novel *Lizoanca at 11* by Doina Ruști. Lucian Vasile Bâgiu, from *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, proposes a comparative reading of Mihail Sadoveanu's novel, *The Golden Bough*, James George Frazer's anthropological approach in his study on magic and religion and Virgil's *Aeneid*. He suggests an analogy with the Egyptian hermetic philosophy.

Translation Studies immerses readers in the exploration of Western medieval texts. Simona Ailenii, from *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iași, analyses the lexicon of power in French Arthurian, Galician-Portuguese, and Romanian texts, focusing on their linguistic and stylistic features. Laura Lazăr Zăvăleanu, from *Babeș-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, opens the *Cultural Studies* section with a study that identifies in *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosie* the inaugural manifestations of Romanian Humanism, which came in the wake of hesychast Byzantine Humanism. Gabriela Hlușcu and Marius-Mircea Crișan, from the West University of Timișoara, continue with an examination of Tod Browning's 1931 film adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula* (1897). They analyse how the film transposes Stoker's acoustic strategies into cinematic language through Bela Lugosi's vocal performance and the minimalist soundscape of the film, arguing that the transnational identity of the actor shaped Dracula's Gothic allure. Arleen Ionescu and Dumitru Tucan, from the West University of Timișoara, complete the first part of their study about the representation of the Romanian Holocaust in testimonial literature and films by adding how Romanians started to come to terms with their Holocaust history in postcommunism.

Anthropology includes an analysis of 245 small holy cards preserved in a private collection in Căpleni, a village in Romania. Mária Szikszai, from *Babeș-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, traces the origins, functions, and connections of these holy cards with local religious societies. Dwelling on *History*, the following three articles present comparative perspectives on regional and European events as discussed by three scholars from the Romanian Academy, *George Barițiu* Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca. Ela Cosma provides a legal historical comparison of various ethnic marked consuetudinary laws from Southeastern and Central Europe during the Middle Ages and early modern history. Victor V. Vizauer analyses the diplomatic relations between the Principality of Transylvania and France during the period 1541–1559, under the leadership of Queen Isabella Szapolya (Jagiellon). A particular emphasis is placed on the 1558 alliance project between the two countries. Attila

Varga studies the German Freemason settlers' contribution to the modernisation of Banat society, as well as to the success of the Romanian national movement during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

In the *Linguistics* section, Gabriel-Dan Bărbuleț, from *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, examines effective language-teaching strategies for international students learning Romanian amidst increasing globalisation. In the section entitled *Education*, Elena Meștereagă, from *Nicolaus Olahus* Technological High School, Orăștie, Romania, and Daniel Dejica, from Politehnica University Timisoara, investigate the role of out-of-class contexts (OOCs) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning among Romanian high school students, emphasising how informal environments complement formal instruction.

Book reviews, the closing section of the issue, delves into two thought-provoking analyses of recent publications. Emmanuel Blaise Tapon from Laval University, Québec, examines Daniela Hăisan's study of Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian translation, which was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2022. Diana Alexandra Avram (Șandru), from *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, reviews *Un dicționar al exilului feminin românesc. Autoare emblematice, volume reprezentative* [A Dictionary of Romanian Women Writers' Literary Exile: Emblematic Authors, Representative Works], coordinated by Emanuela Ilie and published by Eikon Publishing House in 2024.

Extending our deepest appreciation and highest regard, we thank all the contributors to this issue. The recognition of the journal on a global scale continues to develop on account of the highly professional engagement of scholars, reviewers and members of the scientific advisory board. We are honoured by the commitment of our twenty-four peer reviewers from Portugal, Israel, and Romania and our permanent scientific community members from Germany, Spain, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, and Romania. *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies* is published in collaboration with Lund University, Sweden, Granada University, Spain, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania, and the Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest, and welcomes contributions from scholars worldwide.

Bianca-Maria Bucur

Introduction for contributors to Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies

Focus and Scope

Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies (Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Sweden / Centre for the Research of the Imaginary *Speculum*, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania / University of Granada, Spain / Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest) publishes studies about Romanian language, literature, theatre and film, cultural studies, translation studies, education, anthropology, history as well as research seminars and reviews of works within these fields. It welcomes articles that focus on case studies, as well as methodological and/or theoretical issues.

Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies is a new forum for scholars that sets and requires international high quality standards. The journal accepts papers written in Romanian or English, as well as in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Peer Review Process

SJRS has a two stage reviewing process. In the first stage, the articles and studies submitted for publication need to pass the scrutiny of the members of the editorial committee. The studies accepted in this stage are then undergoing a double blind review procedure. The editorial committee removes all information concerning the author and invites external scholars (whose comments are paramount for the decision of accepting for publication or not) to act as anonymous reviewers of the material. Neither the identity of the author, nor that of the reviewer is disclosed. The comments and recommendations of the anonymous reviewers are transmitted to the authors.

Open Access Policy

This journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

Indexation

SJRS is covered by SCOPUS, EBSCO, ERIH PLUS, DOAJ, CEEOL, Index Copernicus, Ulrichsweb: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, and MLA Directory of Periodicals.

Editorial Staff

Dr. Verner Egerland – editor-in-chief, Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Sweden

Dr. Habil. Lucian Vasile Bâgiu – associate editor, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Dr. Habil. Felix Nicolau, University of Granada, Spain / Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest, Romania – editor

Dr. Gabriela Chiciudean, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania – scientific copy editor for Romanian

Dr. Andra Iulia Ursa, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania – editor (proofreading, copyediting & layout for English)

Bianca Maria Bucur Tincu, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania – editor (proofreading, copyediting & layout for English)

Scientific Advisory Board

Alina Bako, *Lucian Blaga* University of Sibiu, Romania
Diana V. Burlacu, Leipzig University, Germany / Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest, Romania / *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Iosif Camară, *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iaşi, Romania
Ruxandra Cesereanu, *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Adrian Chircu, *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Daiana Cuibus, *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania / Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest, Romania
Cătălin Ghiţă, University of Craiova, Romania
Jarmila Horakova, *Charles* University in Prague, Czech Republic
Liviu Lutaş, *Linnaeus* University, Sweden
Marius Miheţ, *Comenius* University, Bratislava, Slovak Republic / Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest, Romania / University of Oradea, Romania
Angelo Mitchievici, *Ovidius* University of Constanţa, Romania
Anna Oczko, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
Roxana Patraş, *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iaşi, Romania
Victoriano Pena Sanchez, University of Granada, Spain
Antonio Rafael Rubio Flores, University of Granada, Spain
Chris Tănăsescu, Global Literary Studies Research Lab, Spain
Adrian Tudurachi, Romanian Academy, *Sextil Puşcariu* Institute of Linguistics and Literary History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Dragoş Varga, *Lucian Blaga* University of Sibiu, Romania

Reviewer Board for this issue

Mona Arhire, *Transilvania* University of Braşov, Romania
Ileana Benga, The Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Corina Bozedeau, *George Emil Palade* University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Târgu Mureş (UMPhST), Romania
Rodica Gabriela Chira, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania
Sorin Ciutacu, West University of Timişoara, Romania
Roxana Elena Doncu, University of Medicine and Pharmacy *Carol Davila*, Bucharest, Romania
Irina Ana Drobot, Technical University of Civil Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
Carmen Duţu, *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University, Bucharest, Romania
Ioan Fărnuş, *Ştefan cel Mare* University of Suceava, Romania
Cristina Gherman, Technical University of Civil Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
Crinela Holom, Center of Population Studies, *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Laura Jiga Iliescu, *Constantin Brăiloiu* Institute of Ethnography and Folklore, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
Mădălina Elena Mandici, *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iaşi, Romania
Veronica Manole, *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Joana Matos, University of Porto, Portugal
Silviu Mihăilă, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania
Speranţa Milancovici, *Vasile Goldiş* Western University of Arad, Romania
Corina Mitulescu, *Nicolae Bălcescu* Land Forces Academy, Sibiu, Romania
Valentin Orga, *Babeş-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Raul Paşcalău, University of Life Sciences *King Mihai I of Romania*, Timişoara, Romania
Dana Percec, West University of Timişoara, Romania
Ana Magdaleana Petraru, *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iaşi, Romania
Ottmar Traşcă, Romanian Academy, *George Bariţiu* Institute of History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Edward Waysband, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Section Editors

History, Theatre, Film:

Dr. Habil. Lucian Vasile Bâgiu, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Anthropology, Research Seminars:

Dr. Habil. Felix Nicolau, University of Granada, Spain / Romanian Language Institute, Bucharest, Romania

Literature:

Dr. Gabriela Chiciudean, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Translation Studies, Linguistics, Cultural Studies:

Dr. Andra Iulia Ursa, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Education, Book Reviews:

Bianca Maria Bucur Tincu, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania

Literature

**GEORGE BACOVIA
A TOUCHSTONE OF ROMANIAN SYMBOLIST POETRY¹**

Cristina Mirela NICOLAESCU
Yozgat-Bozok University, Turkey

e-mail: chris2013x@yahoo.com

Abstract

Romanian symbolism, whose theoretician was the poet Alexandru Macedonski, discovers its authentic and original vision only in a later stage, through George Bacovia. The greatest Romanian symbolist poet caused a mutation of structure and vision in Romanian lyric poetry. In Romanian lyric poetry, authentic Romanian symbolism gained definitive recognition in 1916 with the appearance of this volume "Plumb" [Lead]. It was highly acclaimed for its uniqueness, which derives from an exacerbated pessimism of life, the illustration in a hostile environment and fear of death, an interwar poet who created a lyric of deep sadness. He profoundly transformed poetic language, remaking the basic structure of poetry, especially on the syntactic level. Several types of sonorities can be distinguished in Romanian symbolism, in which, the inner music of Bacovia sounds distinctly, so different, for example, from Minulescu's chansonette. The one that produces the unmistakable sound of Bacovian poetry is, of course, autumn, with its fatal role of turning everything it touches into a lament. Published in the interwar period, Bacovia's volumes belong to "a later phase of symbolism", with openings towards modernism. This paper investigates such features in two of his most known poems: "Plumb" and "Decor". From the very beginning, Bacovia has consistently attracted the interest of critics. Consequently, numerous studies have been written about him, with scholars classifying him in various literary movements. Some, like Lovinescu, consider him a Symbolist; others, such as P. Constantinescu, see him as a Romantic. He has also been labeled an Expressionist (Ov. Crohmălniceanu, I. Negoitescu, L. Ulici) or even a precursor of Postmodernism (Marian Popa). In truth, Bacovia embodies elements of each, following an ever-evolving and intriguing literary path. Others, including Mihai Cimpoi and Dinu Flămând, interpret him as an Existentialist, while V. Fanache views him as a Decadent poet. Despite these numerous labels and the challenges of classifying his work, Bacovia's uniqueness remains undeniable, distinguishing him as a singular phenomenon in Romanian literature. Like most symbolist poets, Bacovia was attracted to the magic of correspondences or the technique of synaesthesia. In the spirit of Rimbaud, the Romanian poet assigned certain meanings to colors, associated them with emotional states, and expressed them in a totally new way. Grey, black, violet, yellow lose their status as simple chromatic reflexes and enter the category of affects. Bacovia took up the symbolic themes that he integrated into his work in a personal vision, with a new language, giving them unprecedented suggestiveness. In-depth readings can convey states of melancholy and anguish, the poetry captivating, at the same time, through its exasperating simplicity and the transparency of meanings, the mastery with which the poems are constructed. Repetition, expression of the inner emptiness, the whole network of parallelisms, the perfection of rhymes, the limited vocabulary (which expresses the tendency towards abstraction), the specific punctuation, the musicality and chromaticism are all trademarks of Bacovian lyricism. The analysis though, will not be limited only to the study of stylistic figures and poetic techniques, but it attempts to highlight the poetic message that emerges from his great work that goes deeper into a philosophical view. The depressive and oppressive state, suggested by the Bacovian

¹ Article History: Received: 24.12.2024. Accepted: 24.01.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

sonorities, is accentuated further outlining the semantics of the words. The two aspects, the sound background and the semantic background, together make up a unitary, complex whole, bearing universal truths. One of the aspects of Bacovia's rhetoric, achieved through the emphasis on imbalance, despair, and acute sadness, is irony, an important element that prevents his poetry from becoming monotonous. His creation may be limited in scope but is most surprisingly unequalled in terms of thematic and expressive inventiveness.

Keywords: Symbolism; Bacovia; symbol; poetic imaginary; stylistic analysis.

Introduction

European Symbolism got its name from the literary manifesto, the programme-article entitled "Le symbolisme" by Jean Moreas. With Charles Baudelaire, who theorised the movement and authored the representative poem "Correspondances" [Correspondences], a new creative perspective has emerged, one in which his vision of the world is intriguing and original, while promoting the concept of modern poetry. The principle of correspondences is based on the cultivation of unusual analogies between things, objects and states, between the outer universe and the world of feelings. The symbolist poems combine elements such as: the internal musicality of the verses, synesthesia, the expression of a state of spleen, desolation and depression, the use of chromaticism. Symbolism offers a new creative perspective that aims to address all the senses according to the principle of synesthesia. Thus, the visual and auditory images intertwine with the olfactory ones (related to smell). The symbolists proposed to make use of the symbol, hence the name of the current. As Mallarmé argued in an interview, symbols contribute to deepening meanings in poetry: "To name an object is to take away three-fourths of the pleasure given by a poem. This pleasure consists in guessing little by little: to suggest it, that is the ideal" (Huret, 2022, p. 2).

Symbolism 'paves the way for actual modernist schools and movements. Moreover, it represents, compared to Romanticism, Junimea and Sămănătorism literary movements, an indisputable step forward' (Goci, 2001, p. 37, our translation)².

The main characteristic of this literary movement is the use of the symbol, but, along with this, there is also the cultivation of suggestion and synesthesia. At the formal level, the musicality of the lyrics is cultivated, obtained through the elements of prosody such as: free verse, refrain, leitmotif, harmony, assonances, rhyme and elaborate rhythms. Symbols are fundamental elements of symbolism through which correspondence is made between the proper meaning of the word and the one intended by the poet such as *plumb* [lead]. Specific themes and motifs are cultivated among which: the condition of the poet and poetry, nature, love, the state of neurosis, the city dweller, death, escape, confinement. At the same time, loneliness, melancholy, the spleen, mystery, rain, autumn, colors, music, the park, the cemetery are the most frequent grounds. The atmosphere of the city is oppressive, the urban environment crushes individuality. Despite a small work (six volumes published during the poet's lifetime and one posthumous volume of poetry) extensive works, studies, reviews, monographs were dedicated exclusively to the poet, who was present in every history of literature, even if he was not always praised. Bacovia is an innovator in Romanian poetry, one of the first truly modern poets of Romanian literature. His lyrics, symbolist for the most part, marked a remarkable

² Original source text: "deschide drumul grupărilor și tendințelor moderniste propriu-zise [...], reprezintă, față de romantism, junimism și sămănătorism, un incontestabil pas înainte".

progress in the direction of poetic expression: ‘Bacovia is one of the most authentic representatives of our modern literature’ (Flămând, 1979, p. 44, our translation)³.

The emblematic poem of the Bacovian lyrical universe is the one that opens and gives the title to the debut volume (published in 1916), *Plumb* [Lead]. It imposes a referential and meaningful symbol on which the poetic vision is based, thus illustrating a characteristic of Bacovian poetics. Seasons and feelings unify the object and inner universe of the poem under a dominating color-obsession, thus creating a strange effect and a strongly personalised language. Nowhere does the word *plumb* appear more tragically repeated than in this poem. Heavy and soft among metals, with its high specific density, with a dull and depressed color, it becomes the absolute metaphor of oppressive, suffocating and monotonous mediocre life irremediably captive to matter, without the chance of opening to the dream.

1. The emblematic poem “Plumb” [Lead]

The poem “Plumb”, which originally appeared in 1911 in the magazine *Versuri* [Verses] under the pseudonym George Andoni, was later included in the debut volume with the same title published in 1916.

Its privileged position reveals its importance as a programmatic text, key to the interpretation of a singular lyrical universe in Romanian literature. It is considered an implicit poetic art, in which the main conceptions of the artist about the world and life, about his purpose in the world, are revealed in a distinct literary language.

The poetic text is part of the symbolist lyrics through the theme and motifs specific to this movement, through the use of suggestion, correspondences between the interior and exterior world, as well as chromaticism in imagery. The technique of repetitions gives inner musicality and drama to the experience of the lyrical ego, while the poetic atmosphere is woven with the help of the recurring symbol “plumb”, [lead] which suggests death. The specific features of symbolic rhetoric contribute to the amplification of lyrical tension. The musicality generated by the syntactic parallelism produced by the obsessive repetition of the word “lead”, the cadence imposed by the pause lines and symmetrically placed suspension points subtly induces a state of restlessness and hopelessness. The suggestion is made at the most diverse levels of the text - from sleep - death analogy, to inner musicality, and the very structure of the text. An ambiguity specific to the first stage of modernism is thus generated.

The poem is an elegiac confession on the theme of the inability to face destiny and the artist’s inadequacy, expressing a feeling of sadness, in the form of a lyrical monologue of a restless self. The main theme is the condition of the individual isolated in an oppressive environment, which generates a state of anguish, a condition marked by the impossibility of communication or escape. The symbol of love combines funeral symbols (“sicriele de plumb”, “cavoul” și “coroanele de plumb”) [lead coffin, vault, and lead wreaths]. The lyrical motifs with symbolic value, such as coffins, graves, sleep, cold and wind configure the funeral setting and support the themes of the lyrical discourse: the death of love, soul oppression, existential failure, and loneliness. The title announces the fundamental symbol, repeated six times symmetrically, which gives musicality to the text and expresses the correspondence between an element of nature and the states of the soul, emphasising the depressing state of the lyrical self. In a denotative sense, “lead” is a chemical element, malleable, heavy metal, illustrating the illusion of transforming one state into another, the illusion of salvation, hopelessness. The connotative meaning derives from the proper meaning and suggests, poetically, anguish, pressure and monotony. The meanings are built on the correspondences between the subjective / human and the objective / cosmic plane. The symbol is associated with different tactile

³ Original source text: “Bacovia este unul dintre cei mai autentici reprezentanți ai literaturii noastre moderne”.

sensations of coldness and hardness, chromatic of grey, yellow and auditory through the use of closed vowels and consonants.

Through repetition, the title-word becomes a central motif in the text and it suggests death: the outer world and the soul world are subjected to mineralisation under the effect of the toxic metal. Lead is associated with all elements: “sicriele de plumb” [lead coffins] as immobility, freezing, isolation, “amorul meu de plumb” [my lead beloved] as death of feelings, coldness of the soul, “aripile de plumb” [lead wings] as fall, broken flight, and “flori de plumb” [lead flowers] as degradation and ephemerality. The vision of the world is gloomy, as a tragedy assumed with lucidity, typically symbolist and defined by the conviction of the impossibility of escaping from a closed Universe, which limits and destroys the being, a drama found also at the level of correspondences established between Matter and Spirit. The vision is non-metaphysical; the text hyperbolizes the state of loneliness, the obsession of a solitary, of a prisoner, of a consciousness frightened of nothingness, of the outside, of itself, of premonition of death, of mineralization, of lead that generates the impossibility of communication. Subjective lyricism is rendered by the marks of the lyrical self: the first person, the singular of the verbs and the possessive adjective. The verbs in the imperfect express the idea of continuity of the state of loneliness, and shouting suggests the inability to communicate.

Structurally, this poem is a creation in which all planes express the same idea: the obsession of the end, of nothingness, of death. At the compositional level, the poem proposes an external structure of canonical type, highlighted by a concentrated speech, organized in two quatrain-type stanzas, respecting the prosodic principles. At the level of the internal structure, the text gravitates around a central symbol, recurrent in Bacovian lyrics, the lead. The two quatrains highlight two planes of recording reality: one exterior, built from a small number of funerary elements rendering a feeling of loneliness and that of lost love. Through the description, in the first stanza a funereal atmosphere is outlined, the outside world is described, literary motifs reminiscent of a symbolic literary topos. The opening verse anticipates the theme of death through the motif of sleep and depicts the world as a huge cemetery. It contains two recurrent symbols in Bacovia's lyric: “sicriu” [coffin] and “plumb” [lead], placing the last symbol at the end of verse expressing the confinement in the horizon sealed by lead and the impossibility of escape. Unlike the romantics, who see death as an opportunity for total liberation, Bacovia proposes a vision of a descent into Hell. The incipit is entrusted with the task of introducing the lecturer to a strange universe, in which objects take on human states, sleeping.

The cemetery is highlighted by the image of coffins, wreaths, flowers, nouns that receive the determiner “lead”, which multiplies the chromatic and tactile suggestions, insisting on the awkward existence, devoid of the possibility of salvation. The epithet “flori de plumb” [lead flowers] suggests ephemerality, but also the loss of charm, tenderness, they are artificial and portend death. The universe becomes a huge cemetery, a coffin covered by death both horizontally and vertically, by figuratively dressing it in a funeral garment. The repetition of the word symbol and at the level of rhyme has the role of suggesting the limitation of the human condition and the closure of existence as in a fateful, implacable circle. The correspondence between the loneliness of the ego and the hostile reality is highlighted by the leitmotif of being alone and feeling the wind. The wind produces acoustic shrills and the cold sensation, specific to death, in the auditory image of the creaking sound, which amplifies the premonition of an inevitable end. In the third verse, the only explicit reference to the lyrical self appears standing alone, thus moving from the external reality to that of the self, the dominant state being anguish, typically symbolist. The second stanza outlines a second poetic plane, represented by the inner world of the symbolist self, which in the static, immobile universe, feels cloistered in a metaphorical cave. The beginning of the stanza is under the sign of the existential tragedy,

generated by the death of love. Love seems abandoned, extinguished, belonging to an irrevocable past. The structure signifies the idea of passing into non-existence. Death-sleep is all the more unsettling as it is not perceived as a transition to a transcendental plane of being, but as the ultimate closure, as the ultimate limit.

The metaphor “*amorul meu de plumb*” [my lead beloved] suggests mineralization, produced by the toxic effect of lead, also including the inner world, while the lyrical self looks at this process as a spectator. The cold amplifies the inner insecurity. The rescue attempt is illusory, like a pose of the desperate self, while the sound of human voice is lost into nothingness. The cry becomes the way of expressing the despair felt by the lyrical self, which he realizes the drama of his existence, as if recalling the vain cry from the painting.

The last verse “*Și-i atârnu aripile de plumb*” [And the wings of lead drooping] evokes metaphorically the image of an angelic flight, a symbol of spiritual ascension in the telluric sphere. The wings are drawn towards the earth and degradation, a metaphor which implies the definitive collapse and abandonment into death. The predominantly decadent Bacovian imaginary, as well as the self-damned attitude is obvious in this respect. The poetic imaginary is organized around symbols and two semantic fields: death, the vault, and the poetic self. The central symbol is lead, which suggests the state of neurosis and soul collapse. The artistic language is marked by an extreme simplicity. Expressiveness has multiple sources, in morpho-syntactic, phonetic and prosodic, lexical terms. The auditory, shrill, “*scârțâiau coroanele de plumb*” [lead wreaths creaked] imagery suggests the effects of an enclosed space and limited existence.

At the stylistic level, the presence of the central symbol “lead” is noticeable, associated with some metaphorical structures and gives visual images the value of obsession. At the syntactic level, parallelism is retained, the dominant method, through which the final quatrain resumes and nuances the atmosphere and feelings of the first stanza. The sentences are affirmative, developed, non-addressed, as a sign of acceptance of fate. Phonetically, the word “plumb” contains a single closed vowel “u”, placed between sonorous consonants, suggesting a heavy, echoless fall. Closed vowels give the feeling of existential emptiness, inner vacuum. The inner musicality is given by the psychic movement that the words trigger.

At the level of discourse construction, the Bacovian phrase refuses expansion, branching, preferring the sequence of simple sentences, in relation to junction or juxtaposition

In terms of prosody, the poem has a sober, rigorous construction that suggests the presence of death, through the closure of the lines, the fixed meter, ten syllables, embraced rhyme, predominantly iambic rhythm, which supports the serious tone of the speech and accentuates the sense of failure. This poem remains an authentic lyrical landmark, both for Romanian symbolism and for the openings towards modern lyricism, being defining for the Bacovian vision, constituting itself as an original existential creed. Bacovian creation possesses a special lyrical charge, joining the series of perfect poetic arts.

Existential elegy and symbolist pastel, the poem that bases its speech on this symbol is one of the masterpieces of Bacovia’s youth. The theme of existential failure and that of death, of the doomed condition of the captive creator in an artificial, inert world develops in a scholarly orchestrated composition. The two quatrains are perfectly symmetrical at the level of poetic syntax and metrical structures. The strange, internalised rhythm is achieved from the predominance of the iambic, embraced rhyme, as well as from the use of sound figures and the recurrence of the key word (lines 1 and 4 of each stanza end with the word *lead*, which also reappears in two medial positions). Structurally, the poetic imaginary is configured on two planes - that of external, objective reality, and that of internal, subjective reality, located in a correspondence relationship, defining for symbolist aesthetics. The plans become coincident under the sign of the same symbol - the lead - and in the space of the same semantic field of

death. The first stanza outlines the landmarks of external reality, in a stylised image, a symbolic space is imagined, the space of sleep, of death. The vault and the coffin are explicit metaphors of death, symbols of the existential void in which the being is feeling captive. They directly name the thanatic space or symbolize (through the technique of suggestion, typical of the symbolists) the closed space of the vault-room, of the provincial fair or of the vast universe of a cave or, perhaps, one's own body in which it is evening and there is silence.

All the words of the first verse are symbolic metaphors of death, of falling into the inertia of lead. The syntactic determinants (the deep complement and the lead attribute) have the value of stylistic superlatives, signifying the collapse into nothingness or inert matter. A fragile and uncertain relationship is established between the lyrical self and this reality hardened in the patterns of death, always torturing. The wind, an obsessive symbol in Bacovian poetics, is an enigmatic entity, signifying the ephemerality and inconsistency of existence or the restlessness of the captive spirit. It is associated with the reason of the loneliness of the being in the universe, emphasizing the existential tragedy of loneliness. In the second stanza, the feeling of loneliness becomes so overwhelming that the being expresses its fear of nothing by shouting. The cry is in vain, without an answer, without an echo in a world where love itself died. The first line of this stanza constitutes the foundation of the plane of inner reality and an unmistakable poetic image. There is no antithesis between this plane of the lyrical self and that of external reality. The inner universe is not configured as a compensatory universe, but as an invariant of the erroneous world outside, in a correspondence relationship specific to the symbolist imaginary. The double verbal metaphor *sleeping* turned is the absolute expression of the definitive removal from life (the image of the one who turns his face from life to the troubling enigma of death. It speaks not only of the ephemerality of love, but also of the loss of faith in it.

The consciousness of this loss increases the feeling of bitter loneliness. Thus, social and erotic loneliness becomes a metaphysical loneliness felt as an inner coldness, as an existential failure: "Stam singur lângă mort... și era frig... / Și-i atârnav aripile de plumb" [I stand alone next to the dead and it was cold / His wings were hanging from lead]. The last metaphor of the text expresses the Bacovian feeling of falling into the sleep of frozen matter, into the nothingness of non-being or into the inner abyss, with a poetic art in which the author directly expresses his vision of the world in an original manner. For Bacovia, the world is a hostile universe, not only unfriendly, but even hostile, belligerent. Death is an archetypal super-character. The feelings revealed are sad, melancholic, and cold. Loneliness is a state of fact felt by the poet cloistered in the morbid environment of the cave. The Bacovian poetic imaginary focuses on the symbols of death.

The expression of disturbing intuitions about the absurdity of an anti-metaphysical world is achieved through the melodic symmetry of the verses, by accentuating words with muted echoes: lead, garment, and wind, and through the music of words with onomatopoeic valences: creaking, cold and cry. The entire poem is built through the successive accumulation of poetic images, through coordination, gaining unity, through the technique of syntactic parallelism that provides musicality. Freezing in the lead of oppressive feelings, the Bacovian lyrical ego transfers its oppressive sadness to the entire universe.

Starting with this first poem, George Bacovia gives Romanian Symbolist aesthetics the depth of substance, vision and expression, generating a definitive break with Eminesque epigonism: 'Bacovia interrupts in the development of our poetry the lyrical discourse confident in self-transcendence. It is his own break from illusion, from romantic dreaming or from the chimera of the symbol endowed with the power to suggest the cosmic mystery' (Fanache, 1994,

p. 57, our translation).⁴ It is apparent that the Bacovian lyrical universe, with its desolate autumns, torrid summers, annihilating, with oversized lead and rain - records an essential milestone in the development of Romanian poetry and a new way of articulating the self.

The correspondence between lead and the emotional states is obvious. The weight of lead symbolizes soul oppression, the gray color represents the monotony of existence, malleability represents psychic lability, and toxicity represents soul intoxication. The theme of the poem is the condition of the poet condemned by a society that does not understand his aspirations. This isolation generates a state of anguish, of restlessness in relation to two fundamental experiences: love and death, sub-themes of the poem. The symbol of lead becomes a leitmotif in the poem.

Structurally, the poem has two quatrains thought on two levels: interior and exterior. In the first sequence, the closed space of the cave suffocates the poet. The poem begins with a verb in the imperfect “dormeau” [were sleeping] that expresses a lasting and unfinished action from the past. Pressing becomes permanent. Time supports the style, and the meaning of the word refers to the idea of universal death, of existential sleep into matter. The epithet “de plumb” [of lead] appears for the first time here in the poem. Flowers should be elements of life, but they are constituents of death. The verses are arranged in quatrains, have a measure of ten syllables, the rhyme is embraced, and the combined rhythm (iambic, amphibrachic) enhances the sensation that the reader is mentally savoring a typical symbolist poem.

At the phonetic level, the consonants (b, p, s, ș) together with the vowels (ă, â, o, u) give the poem a strange, bizarre musicality. At the morphological level, the syntactic parallelism (coffin-love, grave-dead, wind-cold) exemplifies a perfect geometry of the poem.

The general atmosphere is one of Bacovian suffocating, torturous anguish. Although we do not fully understand such a lyrically reflected path, we take into account the need for the prior existence of a state of melancholy to produce such a text, but we do not want to pronounce an absolute verdict in this regard.

The third line subjectivizes the lyrical speech. The poet turns to himself: “Stam singur în cavou...” [I was standing alone in the vault]. Two essential elements (loneliness and the vault.) give an indication of solitude and isolation. It can also mean the inability to overcome one's own limits and one's own condition, which causes enormous suffering. Next, an acoustic element functions as a disintegrating force of the soul: “and there was wind”. The stanza ends with a sinister auditory image, as the plaintive, metallic sonority amplifies the feeling of anguish and paves the way to the inevitable that can happen at any time.

The second stanza surprisingly repeats the pattern of the first stanza through the technique of symmetry: “Dormea întors amorul meu de plumb” [My lead beloved lay asleep upturned]. The poet focuses on the feeling of love encumbered by pessimism and heaviness. The plane is an inner one, belonging to the poetic microcosm of despair for the separation, coldness, death. Moreover, falling asleep is a state preceding death, a dreary expectation. The image of lead flowers reappears; that they are part of the wreaths or the bouquets is no longer important. What matters is that they become a bed metaphor for numb love. On the other hand, even an artificial coffin. The tone is surprising because it implies dynamism, while the general atmosphere is static because of its human, inert features. Only the wind is still blowing. However, the cry is a materialisation of the popular habit of wailing. The dead is called out by the mourners, by the family, friends to mitigate the drama of the final separation.

⁴ Original source text: “Bacovia intrerupe, în devenirea poeziei noastre, discursul liric increzator în depășirea de sine. Lui îi este proprie ruptura de iluzie, de visarea romantică sau de himera simbolului investit cu puterea de a sugera misterul cosmic”.

The imagery echoes the related verse from the first stanza about sleep, stillness and death: “Stam singur în cavou... și era vânt ... Și scârțâiau coroanele de plumb” [I was standing alone in the vault... And there was wind... And the wreaths of lead were creaking].

The phenomenon of death is implacable, irreversible and this fact is suggested by the presence of cold in a synesthesia of sensations. The cold is the prerogative of the night and death, their symbols being combined. The nocturnal setting amplifies the sense of horror that the poet intended.

The final verse implies hopelessness, the lack of hope that ascension will ever be possible again: “Și-i atârnav aripile de plumb.” [And the wings of lead were drooping]. The implosion of the feeling of love is inevitable. The microcosm resonates with the macrocosm and is reflected by it. The isolation in the hostile society leads to the disaggregation of the most human of feelings in the inner forum of the poet. Instead of ascent, resurrection, ascension, we have descent, death and fall. The wings are made of lead. The lead leitmotif ends the poetic discourse.

The poem is a lyrical confession in which the marks of the lyrical self are present. Therefore, we have verbs in the first person (“stam”, “am început”) [I sat, I started] and the possessive pronominal adjective in the first person “my”. Likewise, the lyrical self is also expressed at the level of punctuation through ellipsis and the break line. Both involve a larger pause in the flow of speech, which means additional time for meditation.

2. Symbolistic lyricism in the poem “Decor” [Scenery]

The title of the poem is very suggestive. The poem gives an image of the city, in a hibernal ambience, a setting marked by the image of the park with black and white trees. From the point of view of structuring the vision, there is an alternation of static and dynamic, movement and rest. Thus, the quatrains give, to the greatest degree, the feeling of freezing, of inertia and immobility, while the isolated verses produce a certain impression of movement. The alternation of white and black brings with it the stridency and contrast between two colors with a certain symbolism: white would suggest life, a mineralized life, in hibernation, while black can bring connotations of nothingness, of death. Despite the representative character of the images, Bacovia’s poetry is not actually a pastel. The decor, the description, the depiction of the landscape, are not an end in themselves, but a pretext for suggesting certain states of mind, for rendering certain affections. This was also noticed by Nicolae Manolescu: ‘Right from the first reading, we notice that some phrases are repeated, in a certain order, and that the representation of the winter landscape is strongly stylized’ (Manolescu, 1987, p. 31, our translation).⁵

The picture of the nature’s death is achieved by alternating black and white. The first verse can be read referentially: the white trees and the black trees are the trees without leaves, as well as charred, covered with snow. The resumption of the scheme (in lines 6 and 11), however, attacks the impression of a faithful description by the fact that the extension of the black-white opposition to other aspects of reality (the bird’s feathers, the leaves) introduces a criterion of artificial similarity. The intuition is contradicted by the very simple color code used by the poet. The poet does not describe the landscape, but organizes it according to two opposite features, white and black, which do not immediately have strict correspondences with reality”. The atmosphere that the author builds in the poem “Decor” [Scenery] is one of maximum austerity. The elements of nature are of extreme simplicity, associated with such monochord moods: sadness, melancholy, loneliness. The repetition of some words or some phrases has the

⁵ Original source text: „Chiar de la prima lectură remarcăm că niște sintagme se repetă, într-o ordine anumită, și că reprezentarea peisajului de iarnă este puternic stilizată.”

role of intensifying the emotion, of emphasizing the feelings even more or pressing the accents distributed on one or another of the elements of the lyrical atmosphere.

The symmetries and structural correspondences are, moreover, very eloquent: the first and third quatrains are almost identical, a fact that has the purpose of amplifying the impression of monotony, a non-differentiation (“Copacii albi, copacii negri / Stau goi în parcul solitar / Decor de doliu funerar... / Copacii albi, copacii negri”) [White trees, black trees / Stand bare in the lonely park / A mourning, funerary decoration, White trees, black trees]. The middle quatrain brings, in the freezing atmosphere of the winter setting, a certain dynamism, a more strongly noted movement sensation (“Cu pene albe, pene negre / O pasăre cu glas amar / Străbate parcul secular... Cu pene albe, pene negre”) [With white feathers, black feathers / A bird with a bitter voice / Walks through the secular park... / with white feathers, black feathers].

Bacovia's poem, whose originality lies in the gloomy atmosphere of sadness and decomposition, can only be analysed through the prism of stylistic figures, especially those of construction, because, for this poet, the figures of repetition are just as important as the words in sending the message. Poetry of the antinomies of a nature that expresses soulful contrasts, “Decor” [Scenery] sheds light on the full range of characteristics pertaining to Bacovian processes and techniques. The symbolism passes, through the stylization of the affects and the austerity of the landscape, towards expressionism, revealing the artistic availability of one of the most original Romanian poets. The phonetic elements are often organised in such a way that their use generates, intentionally or no, the expressiveness and musical harmony of the lyrics. There are situations, in the last volumes, when the proximity to the spoken language supports, in fact, the poetic idea and the author uses phoneticisms, deviations from phonetic nature, mostly aphereses, syncope, apocope, useful insofar as they facilitate the musicality of the lyrics.

What is first perceived in reading Bacovian poetry is the sound effect of the verses. Repetition, as a specific procedure of Bacovian poetry, always returns, cyclically, to a fundamental idea or a key word to reinforce it obsessively, to emphasise it.

The poems in which the lines are grouped in quatrains, usually symmetrically organized, with care for measure and rhyme, alternate with creations in which care for form is abandoned.

The prevalence of adjectival epithets should be pointed out. The epithets are not characterized by a great semantic variety, being oriented towards the area the depressive. Special stylistic effects are obtained, above all, by the synesthetic epithet, especially capitalized by symbolists; the simile merges with other figures of speech, creating figurative interference.

Conclusion

The first half of the 20th century was energised by the various artistic experiences, with complicated structures, with an amazing innovative language, with philosophical issues, with a modernist technique. In this literary climate, Bacovia, a symbolist poet with “expressionist sensibilities (open to the metaphysical)”, distinguished himself.

From the first volume, “Plumb” (1916), until the last volume, “Poems” (1957), Bacovia, a symbolist in vision and writing, opened a path for Romanian poetry to new poetic experiences, going through expressionism, modernism and avant-garde in general. Most of the critical approaches to Bacovia's work referred, first of all, to the particular technique of structuring the imaginary universe based on a relatively small number of stylistic figures, which return obsessively, in an obvious attempt to deepen the feeling of existential anguish.

It is surprising that the definition of Bacovianism was sometimes made paradoxically, common conclusions referring only to evidence such as: the austerity and simplicity of the

poetic means, the frequency of mechanical processes, the sharing of a fundamental expressionist existentialism, symbolically manifested.

Critical contradictions can be encountered even in the field of poetic technique. From the contradictions of opinions between Lovinescu and Călinescu, to inventories at the lexical level with diametrically opposite conclusions of Ion Caraion or Sanda Golopentia, this attitude is obvious. Kernel Bacovianism thus remains ineffable, it can always be approximated and only apparently captured.

Although the two views are not mutually exclusive at a deep level, their basis must be pointed out as clearly impressionist. The sometimes-adverse reactions of criticism, the contradictory opinions of the exegetes of Bacovian poetry, attempt to define Bacovianism, to place the poet in one current or another, which only demonstrates the value of a great, modern and current poetry. Bacovia, through his simple speech of great depth, imposes himself in the literary Romanian landscape (despite some negative criticism) through radical innovations that changed the path of poetry from traditionalism to modernity.

References:

- Bacovia, G. (2009). *Plumb* [Lead]. București: Editura Litera.
- Boldea, I. (2005). *Istoria didactică a poeziei românești* [The didactic history of Romanian poetry]. Brașov: Editura AULA.
- Fanache, V. (1994). *Bacovia, ruptura de utopia romantică* [Bacovia, the Separation from Romantic Utopia]. Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Dacia.
- Flămând, D. (1979). *Introducere în opera lui G. Bacovia* [Introduction to the Work of G. Bacovia]. București: Editura Minerva.
- Flămând, D. (2007). *Ascunsul Bacovia* [The cryptic Bacovia]. București: Editura Pergamon.
- Goci, A. (2001). *Geneza și structura poeziei românești în secolul XX* [The genesis and structure of Romanian poetry in the 20th century]. București: Editura Grama.
- Huret, J. (2022). On literary evolution: An 1891 interview with Stéphane Mallarmé, translated from the French by poet Cid Corman, Caesura magazine, May 2, 2022 <https://caesuramag.org/posts/on-literary-evolution-interview-stephane-mallarme-cid-corman>
- Iliescu, A. (1985). *Poezia simbolistă românească* [The Romanian symbolistic poetry]. București: Editura Minerva.
- Mancaș, M. (1991). *Limbajul artistic românesc în secolul XX (1900-1950)* [The Romanian artistic language in the 20th century]. București: Editura Științifică
- Șiugariu, I. (2011). *George Bacovia studii critice* [George Bacovia critical studies]. București: Editura Dacia XXI
- Trandafir, C. (2001). *Poezia lui Bacovia* [Bacovia's poetry]. București: Editura Saeculum.

ROMAN ET HISTOIRE : DE LA CONDAMNATION À LA JUSTIFICATION¹

NOVEL AND HISTORY: FROM CONDEMNATION TO JUSTIFICATION

Laïth IBRAHIM

Université de Mutah, Jordanie
University of Mutah, Jordan

e-mail: iic@hotmail.fr

Abstract

During the latter half of the 17th century, both history and the novel fell victim to an identity crisis, finding themselves in a precarious position. On the one hand, historical Pyrrhonism disrupted the way History was perceived, casting doubt on its validity and accuracy. On the other hand, the novel, a disregarded genre lacking literary prestige, was attacked by literary critics with hostility in the name of morality and plausibility. In this delicate situation, historians and novelists unexpectedly, indirectly, and implicitly united to create a fusion between History and the Novel. This fusion filled the void left by History and legitimized the novel genre. This paved the way towards a fertile and inexhaustible ground for revising the historical methodology and establishing the theoretical foundations of the novel. Consequently, the genre of the novel, by turning to History to justify its existence and connecting imaginary events with verified historical facts, transcends the realm of historical discourse. It takes on a sensitivity that unveils not only the official and public History but also the inner motivations of individuals hidden behind political and social issues.

Keywords: novel; history; crisis; theory; justification; condemnation.

Introduction

Dans la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle, l'histoire et le roman ont été victimes d'une crise identitaire et se trouvaient dans une position précaire. D'une part, le « pyrrhonisme historique » (Hazard, 1961), dont parle Paul Hazard dans sa *Crise de la Conscience Européenne*, a bouleversé la manière d'envisager l'Histoire et a alimenté le discours critique quant à sa validité et à sa véracité. D'autre part, le roman, genre méprisé, roturier et dépourvu de lettres de noblesse, a été attaqué par des critiques littéraires hostiles, au nom de la morale et de la vraisemblance. Ainsi, le roman et l'Histoire n'appartenaient pas « à un genre clairement constitué » (Masseau, 2010, p. 163). Dans cette situation délicate, historiens et romanciers se sont unis d'une manière inattendue, indirecte et implicite pour créer « une nouvelle fusion de l'histoire et du roman » (May, 1955, p. 156). Cette fusion a permis de combler le vide laissé par l'Histoire et de légitimer le genre romanesque, ce qui a créé un terrain fertile et inépuisable pour réviser de la méthodologie de l'histoire et poser les bases théoriques du genre romanesque. Selon Masseau,

¹ Article History: Received: 05.04.2024. Accepted: 05.07.2024. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

certain romanciers récusent l'histoire, tout en prétendant s'approcher au plus près de la vérité, des historiens défendent la légitimité de leur discipline et entendent s'appuyer sur les grands historiens de l'Antiquité, mais ne pourraient manquer d'altérer les faits et même, dans certain cas, de succomber au romanesque le plus débridé (Masseau, 2010, p. 164).

De fait, le genre romanesque, en se tournant vers l'Histoire pour justifier son existence et en reliant des événements imaginaires à des faits historiques avérés, dépasse le discours historique et revêt l'ensemble d'une sensibilité qui dévoile, non pas l'Histoire officielle et publique, mais les motivations intérieures des individus cachées derrière les enjeux politiques et sociaux, comme en témoignent les « pseudo-mémoires ».

À mi-chemin entre fiction et histoire, ce sous-genre accorde une grande importance aux détails et à l'analyse psychologique des personnages. Il représente « une forme idéale pour l'évolution du genre » (Delon & Malandain, 1996, p. 161). Ces pseudo-mémoires retracent la vie privée des individus sous la forme de « Mémoires » où les événements historiques confèrent au récit une crédibilité teintée de vérité, et apportent une sorte de légitimité au discours romanesque.

Avec ses « pseudo-mémoires », Courtilz de Sandras ouvre la voie au roman-mémoires qui s'éloigne de l'Histoire pour se concentrer sur la sphère privée. Le roman-mémoires représente un nouveau sous-genre romanesque qui substitue les biographies de personnages réels à celles de personnages fictifs, comme c'était le cas dans les *Mémoires de la Vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* (2003). En racontant les aventures fictives d'une jeune héroïne dépourvue de noblesse et de fortune, Madame de Villedieu « invente une nouvelle forme romanesque qui met en jeu les ressources les plus complexes de l'écriture littéraire » (Herman, 2014, p. 31).

« Il s'agit du premier roman-mémoires de la littérature française » (Villedieu, 2003, p. 8) où la narratrice se libère des contraintes de l'Histoire pour se laisser pleinement emporter par la fiction. De la nouvelle historique, en passant par les mémoires et les pseudo-mémoires, jusqu'au roman-mémoires, quel rôle l'Histoire joue-t-elle dans la formation du genre romanesque ?

Pour répondre à cette question, nous examinerons d'abord les crises identitaires de l'Histoire et du roman pendant la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle. Ensuite, nous insisterons sur la manière dans laquelle ces deux crises combinées ont donné un nouvel élan au genre romanesque. En s'appuyant sur l'Histoire pour se légitimer, celui-ci subit une transformation et devient un genre littéraire prédominant. Ces étapes préalables nous permettront de comprendre comment le genre romanesque a transcendé l'Histoire pour devenir un outil épistémologique permettant d'explorer les connaissances de l'époque, de la société et de l'individu.

1. Crise Identitaire

Le pyrrhonisme historique² que nous avons déjà mentionné représente le point culminant des attaques dirigées contre l'Histoire à la fin du XVII^e siècle.

Au fond des consciences, l'histoire fit faillite ; et le sentiment même de l'historicité tendit à s'abolir. Si l'on abandonna le passé, c'est qu'il apparut inconsistant, impossible à saisir, et toujours faux. On perdit confiance dans ceux qui prétendaient le connaître ; ou bien ils

² Paul Hazard définit le pyrrhonisme historique en ces termes « on était arrivé, désormais, à une époque où l'on critiquait tout, et où l'on allait volontiers aux extrêmes ; que l'histoire était en pleine crise ; que les uns acceptaient sottement les fables qui l'ont faussée, tandis que les autres niaient tout son contenu ; que ce dernier état d'esprit, plus brillant, plus séduisant, et qui progressait, était particulièrement dangereux. S'il l'emportait, c'en serait fait de tout, on tomberait dans le scepticisme universel » (Hazard, 1961, p. 29).

se trompaient, ou bien ils mentaient. Il y eut comme un grand écroulement, après lequel on ne vit plus rien de certain sinon le présent (Hazard, 1961, pp. 39-40).

Cette dévalorisation de l'histoire a débuté par le *Discours de la Méthode*, publié en 1637, où Descartes, en comparant les mathématiques aux sciences humaines, critique l'incertitude et l'inexactitude de l'Histoire telle qu'elle est rapportée à l'époque. Il s'intéresse « aux mathématiques, à cause de la certitude et de l'évidence de leurs raisons ». Pour lui, les sciences humaines, dont l'Histoire fait partie, ne pouvaient « avoir rien bâti qui fût solide sur des fondements si fermes » (Descartes, 2011, p. 9).

Cette incertitude et cette inexactitude de l'Histoire sont devenues l'objet du discours rationaliste de l'époque qui cherche à remettre en question « les fondements mêmes des champs du savoir pour entrer dans une période de scepticisme généralisé et de refonte des disciplines » (Masseau, 2010, p. 168). Ainsi, ce discours rationaliste remet en question les traditions orales qui servent de base aux recoupements effectués par les historiens et qui altèrent la réalité basée sur les témoignages transmis de bouche à oreille. Ces historiens sont également influencés par une idéologie dominante qui biaise leur façon de penser, rendant ainsi impossible pour eux « d'accéder à une vérité nue, comparable à celle que le philosophe ou le mathématicien est en mesure d'atteindre » (Masseau, 2010, p. 168). Dans son traité *Le Peu de certitude qu'il y a dans l'Histoire* (1668), François de La Mothe affirme qu'« il n'y a presque nulle certitude en tout ce que débitent les plus fameux historiens » (de la Mothe, 1756, p. 443). Cette idée a été soutenue par Fontenelle à la fin du XVII^e siècle dans son traité *De l'Origine des Fables*, publié en 1690. Selon lui, l'Histoire ne représente que « des visions et des extravagances » (Fontenelle, 1790, p. 430). Elle représente « nos égarements » et les « erreurs de l'esprit humain ».

Pour remédier à cette dégradation de l'Histoire et « éviter la tyrannie de l'imagination productrice d'erreur et incapable d'accéder à la véracité des faits » (Masseau, 2010, p. 169), des théoriciens comme Le Moyne³ ont introduit la notion de « vraisemblable » qui permet de présenter une réalité probable. Cependant, cette approche restreint les certitudes de l'historien au monde contemporain avec ses coutumes, ses mœurs et ses usages, plutôt que de donner la parole à des personnages légendaires hors du commun qui ne permettent pas de saisir la véritable nature humaine.

Ce changement de point de vue sur l'Histoire oriente le discours historique vers l'analyse des passions humaines pour saisir la nature de la pensée sous-jacente. Pour Saint-Évremond, les historiens « ont cru qu'un récit exact des événements suffit pour nous instruire, sans considérer que les affaires se font par des hommes que la passion emporte plus souvent que la politique ne les conduit » (Saint-Évremond, 1966, p. 88). En effet, l'Histoire acquiert une dimension anthropologique qui la rapproche du genre romanesque. Selon Saint-Réal, dans son traité *De l'Usage de l'Histoire*,

Savoir l'histoire, c'est connaître les hommes, qui en fournissent la matière, c'est juger de ces hommes sainement ; étudier l'histoire, c'est étudier les motifs et les passions des hommes, pour en connaître les ressorts, les tours et les détours, enfin toutes les illusions qu'elles savent faire aux esprits, et les surprises qu'elles font aux cœurs (Saint-Réal, 2000).

Cette orientation anthropologique de l'Histoire entraîne l'exclusion des sujets publics que les lecteurs sont censés connaître *a priori* et qui sont représentés dans l'Histoire d'une manière superficielle en ignorant les motivations qui se cachent derrière les actes, ignorant les

³ « Il devient légitime, comme le fait Le Moyne, d'introduire alors la catégorie du vraisemblable. Ce qui assure la connaissance est la capacité de l'écrivain à concevoir les replis de la nature humaine » (Démoris, 2002, p. 82).

ressorts qui ont nourri les décisions des acteurs historiques, pour se tourner vers l'examen de leur vie personnelle et vers l'analyse de leur psychologie.

Ce changement réduit effectivement l'Histoire « à une pure narration » (Démoris, 2002, p. 83) et confère une certaine légitimité au genre romanesque, qui repose également sur la narration, bien qu'il soit considéré comme un genre inférieur et exclu de la triade aristotélicienne (épique, lyrique, dramatique). En réalité, la crise identitaire de l'Histoire marque le début de la théorisation du genre romanesque, un genre qui était également critiqué par les théoriciens de l'époque. Selon René Démoris, « la pensée historique enferme le roman dans un dilemme : ou bien il mêle vérité et fiction et il est nuisible ; ou bien il n'invente plus et il est histoire » (Démoris, 2002, p. 186). Ce dilemme préfigure la crise du genre romanesque qui remonte à la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle, notamment avec la publication croissante d'œuvres qui se rapprochent de plus en plus du roman moderne.

Pendant cette période, les discours critiques remettent en question le genre romanesque au nom des règles classiques, de la morale et de la vraisemblance, trois codes littéraires dont le roman s'est affranchi. Car, il s'agit d'un genre roturier et illégitime qui n'a pas ses lettres de noblesse conférées par Aristote aux autres genres littéraires. Par conséquent, le roman se caractérise par l'absence de socle théorique justifiant son existence. Selon Georges May, « si le roman est traité ici avec tant de condescendance, c'est de toute évidence parce que, genre roturier, il manque de règle parce qu'il manque de modèle dans le panthéon littéraire gréco-latin, vice inexcusable vers 1670 » (May, 1955, p. 157).

À cette première accusation s'ajoute souvent l'accusation de l'immoralité du genre romanesque. C'est un genre dans lequel « on s'y gâte le goût, on y prend de fausses idées sur la vertu, on y rencontre des images obscènes, on s'approprie insensiblement avec elles ; et on se laisse amollir par le langage séduisant des passions » (de La Martinière, 1731, p. 190). En effet, étant donné que l'amour est le thème principal du genre romanesque, la lecture de ces romans influence les femmes et les jeunes gens en les entraînant dans des passions suscitées par des apparences trompeuses, mais condamnables selon la morale chrétienne de l'époque. Ce nouveau genre pourrait, pensait-on, altérer le goût du public et inciter la jeunesse à l'oisiveté et aux mauvaises mœurs. Selon Alain Montandon (1999, p. 8), « la fiction romanesque est surtout taxée de frivolité, non seulement inutile, mais dangereuse, surtout par la peinture des passions, source de dépravation et de corruption ».

Or, toute cette immoralité ne découle que de l'imagination de leurs auteurs, puisque l'imagination constitue la caractéristique principale du genre romanesque, « c'est-à-dire son pouvoir de provoquer l'adhésion du lecteur à une réalité fictive, jugée fausse. L'adhésion provoquée par le roman est pernicieuse en ce qu'elle présente aux lecteurs des modèles de conduite empruntés à une réalité qui n'est pas véritable » (Herman, Kozul & Kremer, 2009, p. 19). Dans ce sens, le roman est perçu comme invraisemblable, trompeur et illusoire. Il ne respecte pas la vérité historique et représente les événements de manière fantaisiste ; ce qui permet d'élargir le champ « de l'erreur ou du mensonge ou de plonger le public dans l'illusion et la frivolité » (Masseau 2010, p. 164).

En somme, comme nous l'avons déjà souligné, l'Histoire connaît une crise identitaire au cours de la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle, marquée par des doutes quant à son exactitude et à sa véracité. Ainsi, selon le discours critique de l'époque, l'Histoire comporte d'importantes lacunes dans la description du monde contemporain, des mœurs et des comportements individuels au sein de la société. Pour combler ce vide, l'Histoire se détourne peu à peu des aspects publics pour se focaliser sur les détails du privé, tout en enrichissant sa dimension narrative afin d'offrir une analyse psychologique des personnages et une compréhension anthropologique des passions : ce qui permet d'expliquer les actions des individus dans la société. Cependant, en réduisant l'Histoire à une narration simple, l'Histoire se rapproche du

genre romanesque, considéré, comme nous l'avons déjà signalé, comme roturier, immoral et invraisemblable selon les critiques de l'époque. En effet, la crise identitaire de l'Histoire entraîne également dans son sillage une crise similaire dans le genre romanesque. Selon Didier Masseau, « la crise de l'histoire et les problèmes posés par sa mise en scène narrative auront eu au moins le mérite de faire prendre conscience aux romanciers de leur art » (Masseau, 2010, p. 174). Cette prise de conscience par les romanciers marque la première étape de la théorisation du genre romanesque et explique la relation pragmatique que le roman entretient avec l'Histoire.

2. De l'Histoire au Roman

L'interrogation théorique de la nature même du genre romanesque et de sa relation étroite avec l'Histoire confère aux romanciers une certaine liberté de se rapprocher plus ou moins du discours historique pour créer de nouveaux sous-genres romanesques. Cela leur permet d'éviter les accusations adressées tant à l'Histoire fidèle aux faits établis qu'au roman débordant d'imagination. Cette dynamique engendre l'émergence de sous-genres tels que la nouvelle historique, l'histoire secrète, les pseudo-mémoires et les mémoires. Ces sous-genres racontent les événements de la vie personnelle des personnages placés dans un contexte historique plus familier aux lecteurs contemporains. Dans ce sens, « le narrateur ne s'appuie plus sur des sources suspectes ou des rumeurs invérifiables, il rend compte des faits qu'il a directement observés et peut même devenir un témoin privilégié des événements rapportés » (Masseau 2010, p. 170).

Ainsi, le genre romanesque acquiert de nouvelles fonctions qui visent à corriger « l'histoire en en taisant les laideurs » et à le compléter « en en révélant les secrets » (Coulet, 2014, p. 253). Elles expliquent « des événements publics par quelque intrigue amoureuse, quelque vengeance personnelle, quelque rivalité, quelque incident d'ordre privé dans lequel aurait été impliqué un personnage historique » (Coulet, 2014, p. 254), et dénoncent « les illusions de l'histoire politique » (May, 1963, p. 52).

En effet, « l'apparition de ces petits romans, souvent ancrés dans une réalité historique, marque un changement d'esthétique de la forme romanesque » (Deharbe, 2012, p. 67). Ce changement se manifeste de manière significative dans les mémoires historiques qui sont des récits à la première personne souvent tirés des témoignages oraux. Ces mémoires racontent l'histoire d'une personnalité publique en mêlant les événements de sa vie avec les événements historiques. L'objectif est de « laisser aux descendants un morceau de l'histoire familiale », « faire connaître à l'avenir des faits restés secrets ou négligés par les historiens », et de « laisser sa trace dans l'histoire » (Démoris, 2002, p. 60).

Dans ce type de texte, les rapports entre Histoire, mémoires et fiction subissent des transformations et s'entremêlent pour donner naissance aux pseudo-mémoires. C'est un nouveau sous-genre romanesque qui a été introduit par Courtilz de Sandras dans ses *Mémoires de M. L.C.D.R. Contenant ce qui s'est passé de plus Particulier sous le Ministère du Cardinal de Richelieu et du Cardinal Mazarin, avec Plusieurs Particularités Remarquables du Règne de Louis le Grand*, publié en 1687. En introduisant la dimension fictionnelle dans les mémoires historiques, Courtilz de Sandras y relate la vie d'un personnage fictif, le comte de Rochefort, sur un fond historique où les événements « historiques » de l'époque authentifient la fiction et lui donnent une certaine légitimité. Il s'agit, pour lui, de « rapprocher le lieu et l'époque de l'action romanesque du lieu et de l'époque du lecteur » (May, 1963, p. 49).

Cependant, malgré les contradictions existant dans ces mémoires, notamment entre les événements qui jalonnent la vie du personnage et les faits historiques, la cohérence de l'œuvre repose sur la personnalité du héros. En racontant sa vie à la première personne, le héros parvient à relier la fiction et l'Histoire d'une manière satisfaisante, en accord avec les exigences

esthétiques de l'époque, comme c'était le cas dans les *Mémoires* de Pontis, les *Mémoires* des nièces de Mazarin et les *Aventures* de d'Assoucy, publiés entre 1675 et 1678⁴. En effet, « la référence à une source historique innocente le romancier de toute intention d'allusion à l'actualité. Elle confère en même temps une dignité à ce genre moderne qu'est le roman, dont l'élaboration, comme celle des grands genres, passe par un intermédiaire textuel, principalement les mémoires » (Démoris, 2002, p. 94). Ainsi, cette approche permet au texte romanesque d'éviter les condamnations associées à ce genre, et de faire perdre aux mémoires « leur fonction d'information historique, puisque s'y trouve privilégié le trajet d'une âme, qui se donne en exemple » (Démoris, 2002, p. 76). Dans cette perspective, « Courtilz de Sandras manifestera une rupture qui concerne donc à la fois l'héritage romanesque et celui de la tradition historiographique » (Berchtold, 1997, p. 151). Cette rupture correspond à une « désacralisation de l'Histoire » (Démoris, 2002, p. 8) et une séparation progressive entre le roman et l'Histoire. Toutefois, cette désacralisation ouvre de nouvelles perspectives aux critiques qui estiment que le mélange de vérité et de fiction est risqué et dépourvu de morale, notamment la représentation du point de vue subjectif du narrateur nécessairement partiel, parfois douteux et toujours suspect.

Pour mettre fin à ces critiques, Madame de Villedieu a repris la structure narrative des pseudo-mémoires, tout en écartant tous les éléments liés à l'Histoire pour inventer ainsi le roman-mémoires. Ce sous-genre, qui a établi les fondements du roman moderne, est devenu la forme canonique de la fiction pendant la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle, surtout avec Prévost, Lesage et Marivaux. Il s'agit d'un récit à la première personne qui raconte les aventures romanesques d'un personnage fictif qui n'a aucune existence dans la réalité. Ainsi, Madame de Villedieu affirme dans son *Avis au lecteur* de son *Journal Amoureux* :

Encore qu'il y ait beaucoup de noms Illustres dans cette Histoire, qui la font croire véritable, il ne faut pas toutefois la regarder de cette manière. C'est un petit roman fait sous le Règne de Henri II, comme nous avons vu sous celui d'Alexandre et d'Auguste. L'on n'y a inséré des noms connus, que pour flatter agréablement votre imagination (Villedieu, 1671, pp. 3-4).

En effet, Madame de Villedieu met en garde le lecteur quant au caractère fictif de son intrigue, qu'il ne doit pas confondre avec la réalité. Elle a introduit des personnages illustres, comme « Henri II », « Alexandre » et « Auguste », dans son récit uniquement pour « flatter agréablement » l'imagination par « un simple jeu d'esprit ». Comme le souligne Pierre Bayle, il s'agit de « pures fictions qu'elle faisait passer des noms célèbres afin de les rendre plus curieuses » (Bayle, 1648, p. 866). Cependant, ces références à des personnalités célèbres sont considérées par l'écrivaine comme une faiblesse, surtout pour les lecteurs crédules qui pourraient confondre la réalité et la fiction en raison de ces noms. C'est pourquoi elle finit par renoncer à toute précision historique en introduisant un personnage ordinaire qui n'a jamais joué un rôle dans l'Histoire.

Entre 1671 et 1674, Madame de Villedieu a publié les *Mémoires d'Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* qui relatent les péripéties d'Henriette-Sylvie, une enfant trouvée qui prend la plume pour raconter ses aventures romanesques sous forme épistolaire adressée à une amie au couvent de Cologne. Elle débute ainsi son récit :

⁴ À ce titre, voir Chapitre II « Les mémoires et la première personne romanesque » dans René Démoris, *Le Roman à la Première Personne*, (2002, pp. 98-127).

Pour commencer, je n'ai jamais bien su qui j'étais ; je sais seulement que je ne suis pas une personne qui ait de communes destinées ; que ma naissance, mon éducation et mes mariages ont été l'effet d'autant d'aventures extraordinaires (Villedieu 1671, p. 44).

Loin des grandes figures historiques qui ont influencé les débuts du genre romanesque et des événements historiques qui ont servi de base à de nombreuses trames romanesques, nous sommes confrontés à un récit de pure fiction, narré par une enfant trouvée. Ce récit est façonné par des « aventures extraordinaires » qui entremêlent le fictif et le réel. En effet, Madame de Villedieu annonce une rupture nette avec l'Histoire.

Comme nous l'avons vu, cette rupture avec l'Histoire est progressive. Elle commence par l'insertion d'événements historiques dans le cadre du roman afin de lui donner une certaine crédibilité. Ensuite, dans un contexte historique réel, Courtilz de Sandras introduit des personnages aristocrates et imaginaires qui se mettent à raconter les histoires de leur vie pour justifier leur lignée familiale ou pour exposer des secrets politiques non vérifiés par les historiens. Enfin, Madame de Villedieu introduit des personnages fictifs et sans rang social dans un contexte imaginaire et libérant ainsi le genre romanesque des contraintes de l'Histoire.

3. Légitimation du Roman

En effet, en associant le roman à d'autres modèles historiques tels que les mémoires, les romanciers ont positionné le roman en marge de l'Histoire, lui accordant ainsi une certaine légitimité et le transformant en ce que l'on pourrait considérer comme un « non-texte » (Herman, Kozul & Kremer, 2009, p. 10), étranger aux normes esthétiques de l'époque. Ce « non-texte » ainsi que les critiques de l'époque ont incité les romanciers à élaborer divers stratagèmes pour établir la reconnaissance du roman dans le monde littéraire et pour réfléchir sur son statut générique. Ces stratagèmes prennent des formes variées telles que le récit génétique, le choix du titre, la préface, etc. Ils représentent des réponses aux discours critiques et autant d'efforts visant à donner naissance à une nouvelle esthétique du genre romanesque.

De fait, la relation entre roman et Histoire se manifeste tout d'abord dans le statut du personnage, qui peut être « référentiel », c'est-à-dire lié à l'Histoire, ou « anaphore », c'est-à-dire en lien avec la fiction. Désormais, la forme du roman est associée à un personnage « anaphore » qui, à travers la narration de sa vie quotidienne et l'exploration de ses qualités propres, cherche à constituer son identité selon une trame romanesque définie par ses émotions et ses réflexions. Néanmoins, « parler de soi, même en tant que témoin d'événements historiques, tient donc de l'ostentation, surtout pour les figurants de l'Histoire » (Herman, 2014, p. 42). C'est pourquoi les romanciers ont développé ce que Jan Herman appelle un « récit génétique » dans leurs préfaces. Le récit génétique est un procédé romanesque dans lequel l'auteur explique son rôle en tant qu'éditeur des textes « qui lui ont été remis comme dépôt sacré ou qui sont tombés entre mains par un hasard romanesque quelconque » (May, 1963, p. 144). Ce procédé vise à dédouaner le romancier de la responsabilité de la publication du texte. En réalité, le romancier joue le rôle d'intermédiaire entre la sphère privée et la sphère publique. Il est chargé du transfert du « discours de la scène privée à la scène publique » (Herman, 2014, p. 41). Ce procédé montre en effet l'importance du rang social, la pudeur, « l'embarras général de parler de soi en public, la difficulté de transférer des textes appartenant à la sphère privée vers la scène publique, la réticence qui s'impose à quelqu'un de rang inférieur s'il veut publier un livre » (Herman, 2014, p. 52). Néanmoins, ce procédé confère au texte une cohérence interne et une certaine légitimité pour être publié auprès du grand public.

Cette légitimité a été renforcée par l'utilisation de termes tels que « Histoire », « Mémoires » et « Nouvelles » dans les titres des romans, tout en évitant le mot « Roman » qui était associé au mensonge, à l'extravagance et à l'imagination, et portait en lui les accusations

d'in vraisemblance, d'immoralité et le manque de rang social légitimé par la naissance. En revanche, les termes précédemment mentionnés signalent l'adhésion du récit aux grands genres historiques de l'époque et renvoient à des aspects plus concrets et authentiques, ancrés dans un « monde plus proche et plus enraciné dans les réalités sociales de l'époque » (Montandon, 1999, p. 142). Cette approche témoigne de « la tendance à la redéfinition et à la reconfiguration poétique de la prose narrative » (Ganderoute, 1998, p. 77) de l'époque.

En effet, les préfaces constituent une source d'inspiration essentielle pour la redéfinition du genre romanesque, légitimer son contenu et pour lui conférer une certaine crédibilité à travers des procédés qui le positionnent comme supérieur à l'Histoire. Selon le discours critique de l'époque, l'Histoire était critiquée pour ne pas pouvoir proposer qu'une « vérité nue, sèche et plate » (Masseau, 2010, p. 165). Les préfaces ont donc été utilisées pour justifier le caractère novateur du roman, mettant en avant sa capacité à offrir une narration plus riche, imaginative et captivante, dépassant les limites de l'Histoire purement factuelle. Effectivement, l'Histoire, contrainte par les règles de l'éloquence, ne fournit qu'un discours public et officiel, souvent lacunaire et fragmentaire. Elle se cantonne à la surface des événements et ne peut pas se plonger dans les détails psychologiques ou sociologiques des personnages. C'est là où le roman intervient avec sa capacité de reconstituer ces détails en construisant une intrigue cohérente, bien élaborée et divertissante. Le roman parvient ainsi à présenter l'histoire personnelle des individus en explorant leurs motivations, leurs interactions sociales et en analysant leur psychologie de manière approfondie. Enfin, « explorant et baptisant de menus phénomènes psychologiques relevant de son expérience personnelle et non encore nommé, le romancier prolongerait alors dans l'imperceptible le privilège de la connaissance et s'éloignerait de l'historien » (Démoris, 2002, p. 188). En cela, le roman comble les lacunes laissées par l'Histoire en proposant une vision plus intime et nuancée des individus et de leurs expériences.

Conclusion

En somme, l'expression de la véracité du récit s'exprime à travers la reconnaissance de la fictionnalité de l'Histoire et l'historicité de la fiction. Le roman s'appuie sur des événements historiques de l'époque pour se rapprocher de l'Histoire en racontant ces événements et en utilisant diverses techniques narratives similaires à celles employées par les historiens pour explorer différentes perspectives sur un sujet donné. Cependant, les critiques soulignent que l'Histoire omet parfois certains événements, néglige les détails et les motivations qui sous-tendent certaines décisions politiques, et qu'à ce titre, le roman intervient pour combler ces lacunes. En effet, l'Histoire a tendance à se concentrer sur des valeurs aristocratiques et peut s'éloigner de la réalité quotidienne qu'elle relate. C'est là que le roman entre en jeu. Il joue un rôle crucial en orientant le discours vers la sphère privée des individus et en mettant en lumière les sentiments, les passions et les croyances dans un contexte sociologique familier au lecteur de l'époque.

En effet, la nécessité de donner une légitimité au genre romanesque, ainsi que la confrontation entre le roman (considéré comme roturier, immoral et invraisemblable) et l'Histoire (considéré comme genre noble, mais lacunaire et fragmentaire) ont conduit à l'émergence d'un discours théorique visant à comprendre la nature même du roman et sa relation avec la réalité. Cette réflexion a permis d'établir le roman en tant qu'outil de connaissance, de modélisation, de réflexion et d'interprétation de la pensée humaine.

Grâce à ce discours théorique, le roman a pu transcender les contraintes traditionnelles et évoluer vers une forme littéraire à part entière. Il a été reconnu comme un moyen puissant de capturer et d'explorer la complexité de la condition humaine, en présentant des personnages multidimensionnels, des intrigues nuancées et des contextes sociaux réalistes. Cette transformation a permis au roman de devenir un instrument non seulement de divertissement,

mais aussi de réflexion profonde sur la société, les relations humaines, les émotions et les expériences individuelles.

Références Bibliographiques :

- Bayle, P. (1648). *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (Tome I) [News from the Republic of Letters (Volume I)]. Amsterdam : Chez Henri Desbordes.
- Berchtold, J. (1997). Les mémoires fictifs entre roman et histoire : L'exemple de Courtilz de Sandras [Fictional memoirs between Novel and History: The example of Courtilz de Sandras]. In L. Adert & E. Eigenmann (Eds.), *L'Histoire dans la littérature* (pp. 149-161). Genève : Droz.
- Bruzen de la Martinière, A. A. (1731). *Introduction générale à l'étude des sciences et des belles lettres: En faveur des personnes qui ne savent que le François* [General introduction to the study of science and literature: For people who only know French]. Beauregard : Université de Gand.
- de Fontenelle, B. (1790). *De l'origine des fables* [Of the origin of fables]. *Œuvres de Fontenelle*. Paris : Chez Bastien et Servieres Libraires.
- Deharbe, C. (2012). *La porosité des genres littéraires au XVIIIe siècle : Le roman-mémoires et le théâtre* (Vol. 1) [The porosity of literary genres in the 18th century: The memoir-novel and the theater (Vol. 1)]. École doctorale « Sciences de l'homme et de la société ». Direction : F. Gevrey & M. A. Bernier.
- Delon, M., & Malandain, P. (1996). *Littérature française du XVIIIe siècle* [French literature of the 18th century]. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Démoris, R. (2002). *Le Roman à la première personne : Du Classicisme aux Lumières* [The first-person novel: From Classicism to the Enlightenment]. Genève : Droz.
- Descartes, R. (2011). *Discours de la méthode* [Discourse on the method]. Paris : Les Échos du Maquis. [Édition électronique].
- Grandroute, R. (1998). Fiction et philosophie dans Sethos [Fiction and philosophy in Sethos]. In A. Rivara & A. McKenna (Eds.), *Le Roman des années trente : La génération de Prévost et de Marivaux* [The novel of the 1730s: The generation of Prévost and Marivaux] (pp. 163-176). Saint-Etienne : Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne.
- Hazard, P. (1961). *La crise de la conscience européenne 1680-1715* [The crisis of the European mind: 1680-1715]. Paris : Fayard.
- Herman, J. (2014). La Vie de Marianne et le modèle du roman-mémoires [The life of Marianne and the model of the memoir-novel]. In F. Magnot-Ogilvy (Ed.), *Nouvelles lectures de La Vie de Marianne : Une « dangereuse petite fille »* [New readings of La Vie de Marianne] (pp. 30-53). Paris : Classiques Garnier.
- Herman, J., Kozul, M., & Kremer, N. (2009). Crise et triomphe du roman au XVIIIe siècle : Un bilan [Crisis and triumph of the novel in the 18th century: A review]. In M. Delon & P. Stewart (Eds.), *Le second triomphe du roman* [The second triumph of the novel], (SVEC 2009/1). Oxford : Voltaire Foundation.

- La Mothe Le Vayer, F. (1756). *Œuvres* (Nouvelle édition, t. V) [Works (New edition, Vol. 7)]. Paris : Dresde.
- Masseau, D. (2010). Histoire et roman au XVII^e siècle : La querelle des Théoriciens : Polémique stérile ou débat fécond ? [History and novel in the 17th century: The theorists' quarrel : Sterile controversy or fruitful debate?]. *Dix-Septième Siècle* [The seventeenth century], 2010(1), 163-176.
- May, G. (1955). L'histoire a-t-elle engendré le roman ? Aspects français de la Question au seuil du siècle des Lumières [Did history generate the novel? French aspects of the question on the threshold of the Enlightenment]. *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* [Journal of literary history of France], 55(2), 155-176.
- May, G. (1963). *Le dilemme du roman au XVIII^e siècle* [The dilemma of the novel in the 18th century]. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Montandon, A. (1999). *Le roman au XVIII^e siècle en Europe* [The novel in the 18th century in Europe]. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Saint-Évremond. (1966). Sur les historiens François [On French historians]. *Œuvres en prose* [Prose]. Paris : Marcel Didier.
- Saint-Réal, Abbé de. (2000). *De l'usage de l'histoire : Discours quatrième* [Of the use of history: fourth discourse]. Paris : GERL 17/18, « Arts et texte ».
- Villedieu, Madame de. (1671). *Le journal amoureux* [The love diary]. Amsterdam : Chez Isaacvan Dyck.
- Villedieu, Madame de. (2003). *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* [Memoirs of the Life of Henriette-Sylvie de Molière], (R. Démoris, Ed.). Paris : Éditions Desjonquères.

LIZOANCA, WOUNDS AND CRUEL REALITY¹

Gabriela CHICIUDEAN

1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania

e-mail: gabriela.chiciudean@uab.ro

Abstract

Physical and mental aggression constantly inflicted on an individual at any age is associated with the concept of torture. Torture, in its inherent sense, refers to the physical suffering caused by repeated aggression. While from the 13th to the 17th century torture used to serve the church or the army, it was later adopted for private situations as deliberate suffering inflicted by one person on another. The deliberate infliction of physical or mental suffering on an individual, especially a child, extends far beyond the public sphere and may be explained by inhumane impulses that are either pathological or hereditary.

Doina Ruști's novel, "Lizoanca at 11", is a very good example in this sense. It follows the destiny of a child, wounded both by her parents and by Romanian society after the communist period; this child's trauma is connected to those experienced by the other heroes. By repetitively returning to the age of 11, they relive their own unhealed wounds, affording us to talk about a rather serious problem: the persistence of trauma across generations and its social implications. Starting from the theoretical references offered by Cathy Caruth, we intend to underline that trauma is not understood as a wound inflicted on the body, but on the mind. It is not an event that, like a wound, heals over time, but something that imposes itself, repeatedly, returning to the brutal event which provoked this trauma and maintaining it.

Whether read for the first time or revisited, the story of the 11-year-old girl in Doina Ruști's best-known novel, continues to shock its readers. It is a story that transcends realism and naturalism, fitting into the genre of childhood trauma literature, a field that is attracting increasing attention from researchers today. Viewed through this lens, Doina Ruști's novel offers profound insights. The narrative is realistic, with vivid characters and a portrayal of poverty and lack of education intertwined with corruption, selfishness, and neglect. This creates an atmosphere that drives Eliza to run away from home and become a prostitute. The novel aims to present the characters' actions and behaviours from an external perspective, without delving into psychological interpretations or explanations. This objective, almost camera-like focus, gradually reveals the unfolding events, with the characters portrayed as neither entirely positive nor negative. The emphasis is placed entirely on the transformations in the child's psyche, shaped by her interactions with a predominantly adult environment. This allows readers to trace the thought processes of the novel's central female protagonist. In its third re-edition, the novel introduces a significant addition, concluding the previously 'indecisive' open ending with an epilogue where hope no longer has a place, and Lizoanca's 'mute scream' fills every space.

Keywords: Doina Ruști; Lizoanca; trauma literature; childhood trauma; post-communist society.

1. Trauma Literature

Physical and mental aggression constantly inflicted on an individual at any age is associated with the concept of torture. Torture, with its meanings, refers to physical suffering

¹ Article History: Received: 23.07.2024. Accepted: 17.02.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

caused by repeated aggression. If from the 13th to the 17th century torture was used by the church or by the army as an instrument supposed to make people confess the truth under extreme pressure, it was later adopted for private cases as well, becoming a suffering deliberately inflicted by one person on another (Marchedon, 2021, pp. 188-193). The deliberate infliction of suffering, especially on a child, transcends the public sphere. It may stem from inhumane impulses, which are either pathological or hereditary. In Romanian literature, “the effects of existential traumas on large communities”² have often been investigated (Ilie, 2022, p. 74). The analysis of individual destinies, particularly in the context of what is termed trauma literature—or, in this case, childhood trauma literature—is gaining increasing interest.

Generally, “after enduring traumatic episodes, both verbal and especially physical”, victims “may experience states of depersonalization, accompanied by a sense of lost identity. They become vulnerable, inert, and may undergo a metamorphosis.” (Chiciudean, 2023, p. 382). Thus, when tracing the sufferings or fears of infantile identities, quite numerous in Romanian literature, one can discover that they are “captured in their transformations or decompositions due to the unfavourable impact of adult alterity, finding themselves in borderline situations, their attitude often generating chaos and self-destruction” (Chiciudean, 2023, p. 380). In this respect, besides Doina Ruști’s *Lizoanca la 11 ani* [*Lizoanca at the age of eleven*], the novels of Radu Aldulescu, Ioana Nicolae or Doina Ruști are revealing. Generally speaking, through her prose, Doina Ruști ranks among the writers in whose work we discover images “of the external, historical and cultural determinations that have influenced the imaginary explored by the authors /.../ authors who reveal an ideology rooted in the motivation to draw inspiration from the brutal reality of the times they are living through” (Marchedon, 2023, p. 178).

The aforementioned theme is approached with a fair amount of imagination, with the more or less explicit aim of shocking the audience, either to raise alarm or to inform new generations—who are far more vulnerable and exposed to various temptations. In fact, literature generally legitimizes itself as a container of experiences, including traumatic ones, and can be interpreted, in C. Caruth’s terms, as a return to the brutal event that produces trauma. (1996, p. 3).

Our analysis will focus on Doina Ruști’s *Lizoanca la 11 ani* [*Lizoanca at the age of eleven*], the most representative novel in this respect. As already mentioned, the main character’s trauma begins at the age of 11, the author attempting to follow the destiny of a child wounded both by her parents and by the Romanian society, socially and morally transformed after the communist period.

2. A Novel in its Third Edition

The republication of the novel *Lizoanca at the age of eleven* (Ruști, 2023), as well as its translation into numerous foreign languages, becomes a living proof of its narrative value. Its literary and documentary quality has been confirmed by many critics, including Antonio J. Ubero who wrote in the Spanish daily newspaper *La Opinión* that, although “painful”, heartbreaking and “uncomfortable”, it reveals

the corruption of an entire society, weighed down by a terrible past that has morally degraded it. /.../ Ruști transforms her work into a fierce critique of depravity and moral

² All translations in this paper belong to us.

decay. Beyond its documentary value, it is a novel with remarkable literary qualities.³ (Ubero, cited in Ruști, 2023, pp. 275-276).

Doina Ruști's activity as a writer is intense. Being constantly connected with her readers, with their expectations, she has written numerous novels of a great variety and novelty. "Ever since her debut in prose in 2004 with *Omulețul Roșu* [The little red man], the word most often used in connection with her novels is vigour"⁴ (Radu, 2009), underlines Tania Radu, while Nicolae Breban states that "In my opinion, the certainty, the mastery of portrayal, the exact and original description of the environment, the pursuit of a subtle crescendo in the epic with a false air of static situations, make of Doina Ruști a first-rate prose writer of the current literature"⁵ (Breban as cited in Ruști, 2023, p. 272).

Whether read for the first time or re-read, *Lizoanca at the age of eleven* continues to shock. It is the story of an 11-year-old girl that fits not into realism or naturalism, but into the literature of childhood trauma—a field that is increasingly drawing the attention of researchers and offering surprising insights.

3. A Construct Dominated by "Wounds"

Following the theoretical and applied research emerged after Cathy Caruth's initiative and having in mind Doina Ruști's novel, Emanuela Ilie notes that literature is a favourable ground in "exploring the unspeakable, in representing, through words, the constitutive wounds, be they individual or collective"⁶ (2022, p. 74).

Having as a starting point a news item read in a newspaper (Ruști, 2023, p. 7) and being primarily concerned with the message she would convey, the author confesses: "At the time, I never imagined that this novel would become my well-known work or be translated into so many languages. /.../ I simply wanted it to be read and to connect with readers."⁷ (Ruști, 2023, p. 7).

The image of *Lizoanca*, the 11-year-old girl living in a small village called Satul Nou, is built against the backdrop of the corrupt Romanian society, transformed in the last decades of misunderstood freedom. The young girl inadvertently comes to the core of national public attention, under the accusation of spreading a disease. The novel thrives on "a cruel and heartbreakingly present reality in Romanian society"⁸ (Boldizar, 2020), namely the fact that "an 11-year-old prostitute /.../ has spread syphilis throughout the entire village"⁹ (Boldizar, 2020). First, the girl's age shocks, since "the age of 11 /.../ 'is one of awakening lucidity' and the justification for this statement will leave you stunned after encountering *Lizoanca*"¹⁰ (Boldizar, 2020). Equally shocking is the world in which *Lizoanca* moves, a "chilling, agitated

³ Original text: „corupția întregii societăți, împovărată de un trecut terifiant, care a doborât-o moral. /.../ Ruști convertește romanul său într-o acțiune furioasă îndreptată împotriva depravării și a decăderii morale. Dincolo de valoarea documentară, e un roman cu extraordinare calități literare”.

⁴ Original text: „De la debutul în proză în 2004 cu *Omulețul roșu*, cuvântul cel mai des întrebuințat în legătură cu romanele ei este vigoare”.

⁵ Original text: „Siguranța, măiestria portretizării, descrierea exactă și originală a mediului, urmărirea unui crescendo subtil al epicului cu aerul fals al stării pe loc, fac din Doina Ruști, după părerea mea, un prozator de primă mărime al literaturii actuale”.

⁶ Original text: „a explora indicibilul, de a reprezenta, prin intermediul cuvintelor, rănilor constitutive, fie ele ale individului ori ale colectivității”.

⁷ Original text: „Nu mă gândeam atunci că va deveni romanul meu cel mai cunoscut, că va fi tradus în atâtea limbi /.../. Voiam doar să fie citit, să mă conectez cu cititorii”.

⁸ Original text: „o realitate crudă și sfișietor de prezentă în societatea românească”.

⁹ Original text: „o prostituată de 11 ani /.../ a umplut un întreg sat de sifilis”.

¹⁰ Original text: „vârsta de 11 ani /.../ 'este una a trezirii lucidității' și dreptatea pe care o dai acestei afirmații o să te arunce cu capul de pământ după ce ai cunoscut-o pe *Lizoanca*”.

one, drained by alcoholism, depravity and social frustrations, whose vitality has a profoundly negative meaning, all the more frightening for its verisimilitude”¹¹ (Radu, 2014).

Lizoanca is part of a family in which physical and mental abuse is legalized by a community in which children are frequently subjected to all kinds of aggression. The girl is a victim who defends herself against her father, Cristel, an alcoholic keeping his entire family in terror of verbal and physical abuse. It seems that he “inoculates [the girl] with the morbus of self-destruction”¹² (Ilie, 2022, p. 77). The description of the beatings to which he subjects Lizoanca is significant:

The man’s hand had grasped her ear and a few tufts of her hair and was now pulling her through the holes in the fence /.../ The man jerked the red, tear-soaked head that was struggling in the fence’s hole and quickly administered a fist across her head. Then he clamped her mouth between his fingers, as in a pair of pliers, and finally half dragged her into the courtyard grass¹³ (Ruști, 2023, p. 27).

Lizoanca defends herself the best she can, most of the time without success, “screaming at the top of her voice: - My God, you ox, eat yourself to death, what have you got against me? Damn you and your father and mother together!”¹⁴ (Ruști, 2023, p. 27). One saving method, which sometimes worked, was to feign fainting:

Lizoanca lifted her eyes from the grass just in time to see the sole of the sneaker, as she felt the impact, stopping her breathing without warning. She could not feel her left jaw, but she knew that drool was dripping through the threads of the ivy. Five or six more kicks to go, and if she played dead, she might escape.¹⁵ (Ruști, 2023, p. 27).

Torture generally causes trauma to both the victim and the executioner. In Cristel’s case, one observes obsession and unjustified cruelty, but also a minimal emotion generated by his daughter’s suffering. Although not empathic, he is not a sociopath. Some theory illuminating the fine line between being a sociopath and beating one’s children is necessary for the overall understanding. In this respect, Dr. Bandura’s concept of moral disengagement (2016) explains how individuals justify harmful behaviours to reduce cognitive dissonance. For a parent who beats their child, moral disengagement might occur through rationalizations like “It’s for their own good” or “I’m teaching them discipline”, even though such acts are clearly abusive. Sociopaths may take this further, not needing such justifications due to their lack of guilt and emotional disconnect. Lizoanca’s father exerts his power simply because of the prevailing mentality in Romanian society at the time. As the head of the family, he holds the right over life and death, and thus everyone is expected to obey him.

Thus, Eliza Niță lives in a world which is “creepy, agitated, drained by alcoholism, depravity and social frustrations, with a profoundly negative sense of vitality”¹⁶ (Radu, 2014).

¹¹ Original text: „înfiorătoare, agitată, secătuită de alcoolism, depravare și frustrări sociale, de o vitalitate cu sens profund negativ, mai înspăimântătoare încă prin verosimilitatea ei”.

¹² Original text: „îi inoculează [fetei] morbul autodistrugerii”

¹³ Original text: „Mîna bărbatului îi apucase urechea și cîteva smocuri de păr și-o trăgea acum printre ulucile gardului. /.../ Bărbatul trase c-o zvîcnitură căpăîna roșie, îmbibată de plîns, care se zbătea în gaura din gard, și-i rase rapid un pumn în creștet. Apoi îi cuprinse gura între degete, ca într-un clește, și, în sfîrșit, o trase pe jumătate în iarba din curte”

¹⁴ Original text: „urlînd cu toată vocea: - Dumnezeii mă-tii de bou, mînca-te-ar viermii mort, ce-ai mă cu mine? Fire-ai al dracu’ tu cu ta-tu’ și cu mă-ta la un loc!”

¹⁵ Original text: „Mîna bărbatului îi apucase urechea și cîteva smocuri de păr și-o trăgea acum printre ulucile gardului. /.../ Bărbatul trase c-o zvîcnitură căpăîna roșie, îmbibată de plîns, care se zbătea în gaura din gard, și-i rase rapid un pumn în creștet. Apoi îi cuprinse gura între degete, ca într-un clește, și, în sfîrșit, o trase pe jumătate în iarba din curte”.

¹⁶ Original text: „înfiorătoare, agitată, secătuită de alcoolism, depravare și frustrări sociale, de o vitalitate cu sens profund negativ”.

Her portrait is achieved in full accordance with the plastic atmosphere of the village situated on the Neajlov river, namely “a furious savagery, fled to the coves because of the daily ritual of extermination: beatings, scandals and drunkenness, a mother reduced to the status of an animal through years of uninterrupted fear, a primitive, alcoholic, cruel, resentful father, born of a rape and raised by an unhappy nymphomaniac”¹⁷ (Radu, 2014). In fact, Doina Ruști frequently shocks with mainly plastic comparisons, such as: Cristel’s head twisted by a “rashy wart”¹⁸ (Ruști, 2023, p. 27); Eliza’s eyes, “large and deep”¹⁹, “looked like two holes cut out on paper”²⁰ (Ruști, 2023, p. 56); Gica was a “woman with the face of a fly, rather dirty, with a snout tightly pursed”²¹ (Ruști, 2023, p. 87); Grecu had the face of a “broken snowshoe”²² (Ruști, 2023, p. 127), Nuțica’s hair looked “like a nervous hedgehog, and her face looked like a stretched muslin”²³ (Ruști, 2023, p. 113); Goarne’s palms were “as long as carpet beating paddles”²⁴ (Ruști, 2023, p. 31).

The story is believable, with vivid characters, where poverty and lack of education are deeply intertwined with corruption, selfishness, and neglect. Eliza runs away from home to escape her father’s beatings. Her nickname, Lizoanca—slightly inappropriate, as such augmentative nicknames were typically given to large, tall, or annoying people—was given to her by the other children “for the devil she was. They could have called her Eliza, Eli, or Lizica, but none would have suited her. Lizoanca fit like a glove; she appeared bearish and hard to shake.”²⁵ (Ruști, 2023, p. 45). Thus, in a makeshift camp on the banks of the Neajlov river, together with three other orphaned or abandoned, hungry and unloved children, Goarna, Titoașcă and Nuțica, Lizoanca ends up prostituting herself for “10-20 lei”, for a “croissant” or a pair of pink sneakers, for waffles or for an hour on television. It is the only way these children may survive, and the scenes created by the narrator are compelling: Goarna becomes pregnant, Titoașcă will be abused by “Belgian pedophiles”, while Eliza contracts syphilis and passes it on to those who, she believes, offer her some protection. In the girl’s mind, “Those men were nothing but good hosts who had sheltered her in the cold nights and fed her”²⁶ (Ruști, 2023, pp. 132-133).

The fact that her father beats her and does not care if she goes to school or not, represents the root of her rebellion against him and against the world. Eliza Niță endures three types of abuse and experiences intense emotional turmoil, without receiving any real support from the adults around her. To her father’s aggressiveness and the indolence of her mother – humiliated and molested every day in front of her children –, we can add Eliza’s humiliation and even aggression at school, which she will finally refuse to attend (Ilie, 2022, p. 75). Even more damaging is the authority of adults who believe they are entitled to act as they do, provoking and encouraging the girl’s impulse to flee from home and escape the destructive environment.

Several men in the village benefit from Eliza’s “services”, and things get complicated when the nurse discovers that Lizoanca has syphilis. Aside from the shock caused by the girl’s

¹⁷ Original text: „o sălbăticiune furioasă, fugită pe coclauri din pricina ritualului cotidian al exterminării: bătăi, scandaluri și beții, o mamă redusă la stadiul de animal prin ani de spaimă neîntreruptă, un tată primitiv, alcoolic, crud, resentimentar, născut dintr-un viol și crescut de o nefericită nimfomană”.

¹⁸ Original text: „vînă rîmoasă”

¹⁹ Original text: „mari și adînci”

²⁰ Original text: „păreau două găuri decupate pe hîrtie”

²¹ Original text: „femeie cu fața de muscă, murdăricioasă, cu botul strîns punga”

²² Original text: „șoșon spart”

²³ Original text: „ca un arici nervos, iar fața-i arăta ca o mușama întinsă”

²⁴ Original text: „cît paletele de bătut covoare”

²⁵ Original text: „de-a dracu’ ce era. I-ar fi putut zice Eliza, Eli ori Lizica. Dar nu i s-ar fi potrivit. Pe cînd Lizoanca era ca o mînușă: o arăta ursuză și greu de clintit”

²⁶ Original text: „Bărbații ăia nu erau decît gazdele bune care o adăpostiseră în nopțile friguroase și-i dăduseră să mănînce”

age, there is an intense curiosity about the names of those who exploited the child. Only when the girl arrives at the hospital does the legal issue of sexual intercourse with a minor arise, and an investigation begins.

Lizoanca is innocent; she is “brave, darting /.../ she enjoys the taste of her first croissant with that child’s pleasure, but /.../ she also knows how to fight back when necessary and is cunning enough for things to turn out the way she wants”²⁷ (Bratu, 2015). The girl will be hospitalized for treatment in Brănești, where she will learn about hygiene, wear clean clothes, and hear kind words. Wickedness takes many forms in the novel, and the only acts of kindness and tenderness shown to the 11-year-old are those of Ion Greblă, who buys her croissants, clothes, and a pair of pink sneakers. Eliza Niță learns the meaning of the word prostitute only at the end of the novel, when she questions a teacher about it.

Scenes like the one in the novel's beginning, in which the girl fights her father almost to death, are fairly common. Following a similar confrontation, the girl ends up in a Bucharest childcare centre, disfigured. This final beating, to which she can no longer respond, will have tragic consequences for her understanding of life.

Lizoanca was out on the porch, as usual, just sitting. /.../ It was more than Cristel could bear. This girl had destroyed his life and turned his name to shit all over the village. In two strides, he was next to her and grabbed her by the ear:

- Fucking bandit! Your mother is digging in the garden, and you are gawping on the porch, like in a hotel!

He kept beating her for one hour²⁸ (Ruști, 2023, p. 240).

After a month of hospitalization, the girl ends up in a centre for abused children. The new stages of initiation demonstrate her ability to survive. She is called the Prostitute, but is accepted with sympathy. Therefore, she thinks “her new life was not bad if so many people knew her”²⁹ (Ruști, 2023, p. 248).

4. The Cinematic Technique

Doina Rusti uses the cinematic technique to expose an 11-year-old child's innocence and inability to understand the meaning of sexual intercourse and distinguish between right and wrong, with no intention of moralizing. The author's style is that of the camera, with the narrator rendering what he sees without emotions or feelings, without interpreting or intervening in any way, a technique that feels “more stop-frame/static than unfolding”, as Radu (2014) aptly suggests. The external focus or camera perspective, which seeks to render the facts and gestures of the characters seen from the outside without any attempt at interpretation or psychological explanation, allows for a gradual revelation of events, with the characters appearing neither positive nor negative. In *Lizoanca at the age of eleven*, neither the press nor the society are directly condemned, and the narrator

... has abandoned the positive or hostile character type of writing; he does not moralize or thicken situations, and he does not even have a reversed vehemence that condemns the press and journalists. Lizoanca is a credible character. This absence of pathos, this

²⁷ Original text: „curajoasă, dîrză /.../ se bucură de gustul primului croissant cu acea plăcere de copil, dar /.../ știe să și riposteze atunci cînd e cazul și este suficient de șireată pentru ca lucrurile să iasă așa cum își dorește”

²⁸ Original text: „Lizoanca era pe prispă, ca de obicei, fără treabă. /.../ Era mai mult decît putea să suporte Cristel. Fata asta îi mîncase viața și-l făcuse de căcat în tot satul. Din doi pași fu lîngă ea și-o și săltă de-o ureche:

- Bandita dracu! Mă-ta sapă-n grădină și tu caști gura pe prispă, ca la hotel!

O bătu fix o oră”

²⁹ Original text: „noua ei viață nu era deloc rea, dacă o cunoștea atîta lume”

refusal of exaggeration, together with the tight thread of the story, deprived of useless digressions and philosophizing, bring Lizoanca close to us.³⁰ (Șimonca, 2009).

The focus is on the changes in the child's psyche, triggered by interactions with a predominantly adult environment. This allows us to trace the thought process of the main female protagonist. With an aggressive father and an absent mother, and growing up in an inappropriate social environment, the child is unable to form her own identity. Her surroundings shape her identification with the significant people around her, influencing her perception and acceptance of reality through their eyes. Drawing on the theory that space affects human beings, Vasile Băncilă distinguishes between inherited space and space acquired at birth. Both types of space influence a person's future orientations, character, and ability to make decisions and act in life (Băncilă, 2000, 4).

In Eliza Niță's case, we observe a type of altered personality, a restructured identity shaped by the circumstances of her life and the spaces she inhabits: her parents' house, the streets of Satul Nou, the banks of the Neajlov River, the hospital, and eventually the children's center where she will end up. Each environment leaves its mark on her. When her father demands she serve him, he establishes a specific atmosphere: "If he asks her something or sends her somewhere, it is as if he were throwing a bucket of dirt over her: dirty, humiliated, and above all with no desire to live"³¹ (Ruști, 2023, p. 100). On the other hand, on the banks of the Neajlov, she feels "chilled by the cool air /.../. From there her heaven began. She felt relieved of all burdens"³² (Ruști, 2023, p. 29). Alternatively, when she tastes her first croissant: "First the smell assailed her: it was familiar, warm, reminding her of her grandmother from her mother's side and her childhood days before starting school. As if their black oven had been opened /.../ from which hot waves came out, from the crust of bread or the pastry"³³ (Ruști, 2023, p. 83). Eliza does not choose prostitution; Goarna and Titoașcă prepare her for it. The child, who has become a victim, a stranger in her own world, without her parents' affection or support, will discover adequate landmarks, but only surrogates.

In studies related to trauma, it has been discovered that the deprivations and punishments intensely experienced before adulthood, together with various abuses, produce premature disillusionment, thus leading to the constitution of a false self and the acute experience of feelings of alienation and inner emptiness (Turlic & Măirean, 2024, p. 35). This is also the case of Lizoanca, who cannot adapt to the children's centre:

November had begun, and Lizoanca had not even caught the news. One morning, she breathed in the misty autumn air, and pain flooded her brain as if a raging river had rushed in from all sides and with it, one by one, all the delights of her past life had flooded in. She knew very well these things were not of great value, but they were glued to the walls of her soul, to the flesh of her flesh³⁴ (Ruști, 2023, p. 260).

³⁰ Original text: „a abandonat tipul de scriitură personaj pozitiv/ personaj negativ, n-are puseuri moralizatoare, nu îngroașă situațiile, n-are nici măcar o vehemență pe invers care să condamne oțova presa și ziariștii. Lizoanca e un personaj credibil. Tocmai această absență a patetismului, acest refuz al exagerării, firul strâns al poveștii, fără divagații inutile și considerații filozofante, ne-o apropie pe Lizoanca.”

³¹ Original text: „dacă îi cere ori o trimite undeva e ca și cum ar arunca peste ea o găleată cu zoaie: murdărită, umilită, și mai ales fără nicio dorință de viață”

³² Original text: „înfiorată de aerul răcoros /.../. Din acel loc începea raiul ei. Se simțea ușurată de toate poverile”

³³ Original text: „Mai întâi o asaltă mirosul: era ceva familiar, cald, care îi amintea de bunică-sa dinspre mamă și de zilele copilăriei de dinainte de-a începe școala. Ca și cum s-ar fi deschis cuptorul lor negru /.../ din care ieșeau valuri fierbinți, din coaja pîinii sau din cozonac”

³⁴ Original text: „Începuse luna noiembrie, iar Lizoanca nici nu prinsese de veste. Într-o dimineață a tras pe nări aerul brumat, de toamnă, și o durere i-a inundat creierul ca și cum ar fi năvălit din toate părțile un fluviu înfierbîntat și odată cu el pătrunseseră, una câte una, toate deliciile vieții ei trecute. Știa foarte bine că nu erau lucruri de mare valoare, dar erau lipite de pereții sufletului, carne din carnea ei”

Moreover, memories flood back: “She felt as if someone was holding her to his chest. Moreover, in this embrace entered sunny days and moments of humiliation, the light dust of the alley where her father had dragged her down, caught in the mulberry tree, the policeman’s homely face, the unsteady hands of Greblă”³⁵ (Ruști, 2023, p. 260).

5. “Shocking community”

The excellent prose writer builds her story “around traumatic individual experiences, seen, however, in close connection with shocking community blemishes, whose punctual analysis can be the pretext for other debates on post-traumatic memory”³⁶ (Ilie, 2022, p. 75). As the novel’s central character – the hunted, blamed and equally beloved Lizoanca – builds up, a series of secrets emerge, and the story becomes a chronicle of a rural community. Doina Ruști captures the moral decay of Romanian society immediately after the fall of communism not only through the abuses to which Eliza is subjected. In addition to the drunken father and insensitive mother, we discover that the law enforcement agencies – represented by the policeman Vică – are complicit, feigning authority, the deputy mayor turns out to be a coward who takes profit from the girls belonging to broken families, Titoască himself is cunning. Each character contributes, through hypocrisy or cruelty, to a change of mentality. Moreover,

alongside the prostitute and syphilitic little girl, there are Belgian pedophiles (!), gypsy child marriages, as well as the child-star industry as products of the horrible media industry, the obsession with going to work in Spain. The relations within the rural community, with their summary feudalism, in the process of substituting moral for media references (see the reporting feats, carried out with the efficient and prompt assistance of the villagers), broaden the perspective ³⁷ (Radu, 2014)

The revelation of old events, carefully concealed by the protagonists, leads to a relatively detailed reconstruction of the decadent history of the last few decades. Lizoanca “is the innocent product of this stultified and hardened world – she appears as an aggressive and disobedient savage, who instinctively discovers, at the roughest school of life, what we pompously call ‘moral conscience’”³⁸ (Cernat as cited in Ruști, 2023, p. 279).

The analepses form a complex picture, with most of the characters recalling their own experiences lived at the age of 11, and these memories give the narrative a repetitive aspect, with several discourses evoking the same event. The age of 11 is a binder, creating links between the characters. Theorist C. Caruth explains in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996, pp. 3-4) that in Freudian terms trauma is not understood as a wound inflicted on the body but on the mind. It is not an event that, like a wound, heals over time, but something that imposes itself, repeatedly, returning to the brutal event, in fact, causing the trauma: “trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt

³⁵ Original text: „Se simțea ca și cum ar fi strâns-o cineva la piept. Iar în îmbrățișarea aceasta erau cuprinse zilele însoțite și clipele de umilință, pulberea ușoară a uliței pe care tatăl ei o țirise, prinsă în crăcanul de dud, fața omenoasă a polițistului, mâinile nesigure ale lui Greblă”

³⁶ Original text: „în jurul unor experiențe individuale traumatice, văzute însă într-o strânsă legătură cu tare comunitare șocante, a căror analiză punctuală poate constitui pretextul unor altfel de dezbateri pe marginea memoriei posttraumatice”

³⁷ Original text: „alături de fetița prostituată și sifilitică, apar și pedofilii belgieni (!), căsătoriile țigănești între copii, ca și industria vedetelor-copii ca produse ale oribilei industrii media, obsesia plecării la muncă în Spania. Relațiile din interiorul comunității rurale, cu feudalismul lor sumar, în plină substituție a reperelor morale cu cele mediatice (vezi făcăturile reportericești, realizate cu concursul eficient și prompt al sătenilor) vin să lărgască perspectiva”

³⁸ Original text: „este produsul inocent al acestei lumi abrutizate și înrăite - apare ca o sălbăticie agresivă și nesupusă, ce descoperă instinctiv, la cea mai dură școală a vieții, ceea ce numim pompos «conștiința morală»”.

to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). Well, in the case of the novel under analysis, the repetitions are achieved by the heroes returning, one by one, to their own age of 11. The literary dimension of the texts, through the repetitiveness of their content, seem to bear witness to forgotten wounds, which show that individual trauma is integrated into collective social problems.

Thus, the heroes of the thirteen stories of the novel have been humiliated, mocked and marked by physical or mental suffering, yet they do nothing to save Eliza. In the case of the nurse, for example, the desire to appear on TV is stronger than protecting an 11-year-old girl. The retrospectives are easily categorized as forms of gloomy anamnesis. They actualize moments of a major identity crisis experienced several decades ago by today’s aggressors, but they only partially exonerate them³⁹ (Ilie, 2022, p. 86), Emanuela Ilie believes. Their excuses for the horrific gestures that lead to “the 11-year-old girl’s painful exit from childhood”⁴⁰ (Ilie, 2022, p. 86) do not impress, since “the reverberations of traumatic experiences will forever cloud not only her perceptions of corpor(e)ality, sexuality or love (with its many facets), but also her representation of family and even society, thus irreparably damaging her entire subsequent development”⁴¹ (Ilie, 2022, p. 86).

Conclusions

Literature, as a mirror of society, provides unfailingly relevant images also in the case of Doina Ruști's novel, *Lizoanca at the age of eleven*. The destiny of a girl wounded both by her parents and by Romanian society after the communist period is linked by the trauma experienced by the other heroes. As events unfold, each character relives its own trauma, unfortunately unhealed. Perhaps this can explain the indifference or lack of empathy, the inability to listen to the other’s “wound”. Through the so-called camera technique, the narrator reinforces this state of facts, rendering what he sees without emotions and feelings, facts and gestures are rendered without interpretation, everything is revealed gradually.

After leaving her home on the banks of the Neajlov and taking control of her life, Lizoanca began to act like an adult, despite her young age. She made her own decisions, though they were influenced by the principles of the environment where she sought refuge. However, she feels out of her depth when treated according to her actual age once more. This becomes evident in the episode where, after being institutionalized, she struggles to adapt to the new, imposed way of life: “She was fine at school. But as soon as she set foot in the centre, she could not think about her own”⁴² (Ruști, 2023, p. 260). There, she did not have the privacy or the friends she had in Satul Nou, “they were directed like a herd to lunch, to school, to the reading room. Even the showers were scheduled. She was never alone. She never had any peace. No corner of that world was hers alone”⁴³ (Ruști, 2023, p. 260). Furthermore, since in Doina Ruști’s novel the external focus prevails, the camera does not directly render the heroine’s feelings and emotions; we are invited to make use of our own imagination and sensibility:

...there is no coincidence that the 11-year-old girl’s first menstruation coincides with the last appearance of the only man who, although unable to resist the sexual impulses

³⁹ Original text: „ieșirea dureroasă din copilărie a fetei de 11 ani”.

⁴⁰ Original text: „reverberațiile experiențelor traumatice îi vor întuneca pentru totdeauna nu doar percepțiile în privința corpor(e)alității, a sexualității sau a iubirii (cu multiplele ei fațete), ci și reprezentarea familiei și chiar a societății, marcându-i astfel iremediabil în rău întreaga devenire ulterioară”.

⁴¹ Original text: „reverberațiile experiențelor traumatice îi vor întuneca pentru totdeauna nu doar percepțiile în privința corpor(e)alității, a sexualității sau a iubirii (cu multiplele ei fațete), ci și reprezentarea familiei și chiar a societății, marcându-i astfel iremediabil în rău întreaga devenire ulterioară”.

⁴² Original text: „La școală era bine. Dar de cum punea piciorul în centru, nu putea deloc să se mai gândească la ale ei”.

⁴³ Original text: „le ducea cu turma la masă, la școală, la sala de lectură. Chiar și la duș aveau oră. Niciodată nu era singură. Niciodată nu avea tihnă. Niciun colțisor din lumea aceea nu era doar al ei”.

aroused by Lizoanca, had become attached to the girl who had at one point become a kind of community asset (intensely despised but used by anyone without remorse or compassion). Leaving a box of croissants and a pair of green shoes at the gate of the centre, Greblă unconsciously conveyed to the little girl not only his emotional support but also the importance of preserving the few moments of past tenderness in lasting memory.⁴⁴ (Ilie, 2022, pp. 93-94).

Emanuela Ilie views this gesture as a kind of promise that, following the forgiveness of “the many abusers”⁴⁵ (2022, p. 94), there will indeed be “a future after and even beyond the trauma”⁴⁶ (2022, p. 94). However, in this third edition, in *Sfârșitul unui Secret* [The end of a secret], Doina Ruști makes an interesting confession about the ending of the novel’s first edition, revealing that the “undecided” ending was left open at the publisher’s request. The author reveals that she kept the original ending and published it in the present edition as Epilogue 2 (Ruști, 2023, p. 7). It is an epilogue in which hope no longer finds its place, in which Lizoanca’s “mute scream” floods all spaces. Trauma, beyond the pathological, “is always the story of a screaming wound, reaching out to us in an attempt to convey a reality or truth that would otherwise remain inaccessible”⁴⁷ (Caruth, as cited in Ilie, p. 73).

References:

- Bandura, A. (2016). *Moral disengagement: How people do harm and live with themselves*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Băncilă, V. (2000). *Spațiul Bărăganului* [The space of the Bărăgan]. Brăila: Editura Muzeul literaturii române, Editura Istros – Muzeul Brăilei.
- Boldizar, R. (2020). Lizoanca. Doina Ruști [Lizoanca. Doina Ruști]. Retrieved 12.02.2024, from <https://ramona.boldizar.ro/lizoanca-doina-rusti/>.
- Bratu, G. (2015) „Lizoanca la 11 ani” de Doina Ruști [“Lizoanca at 11” by Doina Ruști]. Retrieved 12.01.2024, from <https://booknation.ro/recenzie-lizoanca-la-11-ani-de-doina-rusti/>
- Caruth, C. (1996), *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chiciudean, G. (2023). Universuri traumatice și „cai verzi pe pereți” [Traumatic universes and “green horses on the walls”]. *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies*, 6(1), 379–383. <https://doi.org/10.35824/sjrs.v6i1.25144>.
- Ilie, E. (2022). Lizoanca și imaginarul trumei [Lizoanca and the imaginary truma]. În Ilie, E. (coord.), *Doina Ruști. Lumi, istorii, „combinații simbolice”* [Doina Ruști. Worlds, histories, “symbolic combinations”] (pp. 72-95). Iași: Editura Vasiliana, '98.

⁴⁴ Original text: „...nu este deloc înfăptuitor faptul că prima menstruație a fetei de 11 ani coincide cu ultima apariție a singurului bărbat care, deși incapabil să reziste impulsurilor sexuale stîrnite de Lizoanca, se atașase real de fetița convertită, la un moment dat, într-un fel de bun comunitar (profund disprețuit, dar folosit de oricine fără urmă de remușcare ori compasiune). Lăsînd la poarta centrului o lădiță de croasante și o pereche de pantofiori verzi, Greblă îi transmite, inconștient, fetei nu numai sprijinul afectiv, ci și importanța conservării, în memoria de durată, a puținelor clipe de tandrețe din trecut”.

⁴⁵ Original text: „numeroșilor abuzatori”.

⁴⁶ Original text: „într-adevăr, un viitor după și chiar dincolo de traumă”.

⁴⁷ Original text: „este întotdeauna povestea unei răni care țipă, care ni se adresează în încercarea de a ne vorbi despre o realitate sau un adevăr care altminteri nu ne este accesibil”.

- Marchedon, R.-R. (2021). Pe o singură voce, Susanna Tamaro – o cronică a grotescului și maladivului în figurile victimei și agresorului [In one voice, Susanna Tamaro - a chronicle of the grotesque and the sickly in the figures of the victim and the aggressor]. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Philologica*, 22(1), 188-193.
- Marchedon, R.-R. (2023). Determinările exterioare și influențele modurilor psihogene în literatura traumatică (Kenzaburō Ōe, Ioana Nicolaie) [External Determinations and Influences of Psychogenic Modes in the Trauma Literature (Kenzaburō Ōe, Ioana Nicolaie)]. *Incursiuni în imaginar* (14). 177-193. DOI: <https://10.29302/InImag.2023.14.9>
- Moisei, C. (2017). O Lolită a satului românesc [A Romanian village Lolita]. Retrieved 22.06.2024, from <https://matricea.ro/recenzie-roman-lizoanca-doina-rusti-copii-abuzati/>
- Radu, T. (2014). Vitalitatea cu sens negativ [Vitality in a negative sense]. In *Chenzine literare* (pp. 256-260). București: Editura Humanits. Retrieved 22.11.2023, from <https://revista22.ro/cultura/vitalitatea-cu-sens-negativ>
- Ruști, D. (2023) *Lizoanca la 11 ani* [Lizoanca at 11] (3rd ed.). București: Editura Litera (Original work published 2009).
- Șimonca, O. (2009). “Fără patetisme, o poveste cu o fată căreia îi plac croasantele” [Without pathos, a story about a girl who likes croissants]. *Observator cultural*, (465). Retrieved 12.02.2024, from <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/fara-patetisme-o-poveste-cu-o-fata-careia-ii-plac-croasantele/>
- Turlic M.N., Măirean C. (2014). *Psihologia traumei* [Trauma psychology]. București: Editura Polirom.

DACIANS, VARANGIANS, VLACHS AND THE GOLDEN BOUGH¹

Lucian Vasile BĂGIU

1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania

e-mail: lucian_bagiu@yahoo.com

Abstract

The essay interprets four parts of Mihai Sadoveanu's 1933 enigmatical novel "The Golden Bough". The Dacian section focuses on the way geographical, historical, ethnical and social guide marks are introduced to define an uncertain moment in history, the late eighth century in the Carpathians. It also introduces the impetus that must have driven the author to do so and continues with an intertextual comparative reading with Eminescu's poem "The Ghosts", particularly on the depiction of the magus and the unexpected reasons behind the author's choice, i. e. the Viking pathway. The Varangians segment highlights all seven occurrences of the Northmen collective personage within the story, with minimal historical contextualization of the 787-797 Byzantium, lying before the awkward discrepancy between the Northerners' enhanced fictional role and the factual inexistence at that particular time and place. The Vlachs fragment presents the six occurrences of "Blacherne" in Sadoveanu's novel, a documented linguistic and historic speculation of two Romanian scholars on the origin of the exonym "Vlach" as having its source in the Greek milieu of the early Eastern Roman Empire, and the role the Vikings might have played in its spreading, thus proposing an unaccounted-for rationale for the Varangians' diegetic significance. "The Golden Bough" division depicts the similarities and the incongruities in comparative readings with Frazer's anthropological approach and with Virgil's Aeneid, suggesting a more adequate analogy with the Egyptian hermetic philosophy. The essay ends up with a brief expounding of Sadoveanu's Masonic status and its likely function in initiating the imaginary Golden Bough.

Keywords: Aeneid; Byzantium; Carpathians; Christianity; Hermetic; Inferno; Mason; Vikings.

Introduction

In 1933, fifty-three year old Mihail Sadoveanu, with seventy volumes already published, at the height of his literary creativity, authors a novel entitled *Creanga de Aur* [The golden bough], baffling the contemporary exegetes to muteness. In the long run timid attempts to interpret the inner meaning of the aesthetic product manifested, as the bewilderment steadily made room for fascination and enchantment, mostly to the common reader. Historical novel, placid love novel, philosophical/esoteric novel were successive approaches in a concentric effort to attain the genuine insight into the meaning of the novel. The following lines propose an innovative perspective that will hopefully shed a few rays of light on the impenetrable edifice. I will (re)interpret from a fresh perspective some of the milestones of the novel (such as the Dacian theme and the meaning of the golden bough) and I shall put forward features ignored so far to the best of our knowledge (such as the Varangians collective personage in relation to the exonym "Vlach"), hypothesizing of Sadoveanu's Masonic status as the impetus that must have driven the author to draw the inner anthropological sense of his aesthetic

¹ Article History: Received: 03.09.2024. Accepted: 22.12.2024. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

product. For this I shall turn to a detailed reading of the novel and to a interdisciplinary research with revealing information gathered from lesser known linguistic and historical sources. The contrastive approach sums up with proposing an original imaginative interpretation which *may* be congruent with Sadoveanu's sub textual intent.

1. The Dacian

In three of the novel's chapters (the second, the third, and the seventeenth, the last) the diegesis is set in a recondite mountain of the Carpathians, on the territory of the ancient Dacia, nowadays Romania. The exact name and location of the mountain are carefully concealed, for Sadoveanu undoubtedly refers to Kogaionon, the holy mountain of the Geto-Dacians, the place where Zalmoxis secluded himself for three years only to emerge "miraculously" alive, "resurrected", thus convincing his followers of his immortality. Both Strabo and Herodotus provide mention of the happening, the exact location of the mountain, of the cave and of the nearby river being uncertain.

Not much is happening in these chapters, as the author is mostly interested in (re)creating the atmosphere of long time ago of which little if anything is historically recorded. To make it clear that we are at a crossroad Sadoveanu starts his carefully stylistic crafted narration by making a distinction between the way in which "the faithful of old in the Carpathians"² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 51) are counting the time with reference to Zalmoxis, and the distant valleys where "the world had turned towards a new faith in the year 780 since Christ, the Saviour"³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 51). In a realm where the main character seems to be nature itself we are introduced to "the aged man of the old faith"⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 51) at the opening of his cave, prepared by his disciples for a ritual meeting with Zalmoxis' priests, among them "Kesarion, the tall, sprightly priest who headed the file"⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 57). The Zalmoxian prophet is performing the secret ceremony somehow already solitary: "It was the ancient sign of the initiated, which in the remote valleys where the waters run smoothly the priests of the new law, Jesus' law, made over the people at the same hour, as they proclaimed the Resurrection"⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 63). And here we find the very plot of the entire novel. The Zalmoxian prophet is very much aware of the new religion, without having any worries. He accepts it wisely, with stoicism, for, to him, there is nothing fundamentally new in the world, just some fresh colour scheme, merely another suitable structure for the people. "For us, however, what is eternal cannot change"⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 67), namely God, which is one. He even accepts and encourages that the Zalmoxian priests down the valleys should become Christian priests, "if that will increase their goodness"⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 67), as they are ultimately serving the same God. At the same time, the Zalmoxian prophet is very much aware that he will last in the cave till the end of his time.

His apparent unique curiosity, or to be more fair, probably his last concern with regards to his people, is to find out, from the very source of this new faith, Byzantium, "if their peoples are happier now and if the priests of the new law have added one jot to wisdom"⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 69). As a matter of fact, with this cleverly disguised approach the old prophet prepares

² Original Romanian text: "credincioșii vechi de la Carpați" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 50).

³ Original Romanian text: "lumea își întorsese fața către o lege nouă și număra anul 780 de la izbăvitorul Hristos" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 50).

⁴ Original Romanian text: "bătrânul legii vechi" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 50).

⁵ Original Romanian text: "Kesarion, monahul cel sprinten și nalt" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 56).

⁶ Original Romanian text: "Era vechiul semn al inițiaților, pe care, în văile depărtate, unde se alină apele, la același ceas, preoții legii celei nouă, a lui Isus, îl făceau asupra poporului, vestind Învierea" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 62).

⁷ Original Romanian text: "Dar pentru noi ceea ce e veșnic nu se poate clăti" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 66).

⁸ Original Romanian text: "dacă pot fi astfel mai buni" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 66).

⁹ Original Romanian text: "dacă popoarele lor sunt mai fericite și dacă preoții legii nouă au sporit c-un dram înțelepciunea" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 68).

the young priest Kesarion Breb for an initiatory itinerary: “My son, the time has come for you as well.”¹⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 69). Reading between the lines, there is absolutely nothing novel that the old prophet would and could have found out sending his young and inexperienced disciple to Byzantium. As for Kesarion Breb, there is everything he should and could have learned from such a defining trial. The protagonist was chosen because he is “the worthiest for sacrifice”¹¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 69). It is a ritual initiator sacrifice all the supreme Zalmoxian prophets have undergone before, including the old man speaking, in order “to let loose the secret powers of your inner structure; but such teachings are perilous and can only be acquired at the place where there is that bottomless well through which you can get to the other world.”¹² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 69). If able to descend through the bottomless well to the other world and come back, Kesarion Breb will become the thirty-third Deceneus, the supreme Zalmoxian priest. For this, the necessary traditional path is the seven years spiritual experience in an unnamed temple in Egypt. And a novelty is added; another necessary experience, that of Byzantium and its Christian faith. When the old prophet says “I want to know its mystery and whether it is a *new* mystery”¹³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 73), what he actually implies is that Kesarion Breb has to learn about this.

The last practical guidance on the part of the old prophet provides with a few, vague geographical, historical, ethnical and social guide marks for the contemporary reader. He mentions Kesarion Breb should go down the valley to find “a submissive man of the Dacian stock with a strong arm.”¹⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 73). It is the only time within these chapters that Sadoveanu is literally using the word “Dacian” for the ethnic denomination, having otherwise employed a wide range of paraphrases: “old native stock”¹⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 55), “the people of this land”¹⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 59), “the people in the plain”¹⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 65), “the men of the native stock”¹⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 75), “the folds of our mountaineers”¹⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 75), or simply naming the people according to their characteristic occupations: the shepherds, the ploughmen. The way Sadoveanu is naming the inhabitants of the land and the way in which he names the selected Dacian companion of Kesarion Breb arguably implies there were other ethnic groups in the region at the time just as well, something which is historically likely. In the last chapter of the novel, back on the same Dacian realms, the author makes an explicit hint at: “they had come to an agreement with the barbarians and were paying them a tribute”²⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 387).

Further on, the two travellers have to cross the mountain and chose the most suitable way to Ister (Danube River) and from there across to Calatis (an ancient Greek city-fortress on the nowadays Romanian Black Seashore). These vague geographical details suggest they have to cross either the Southern Carpathian Mountains or the Eastern Carpathian Mountains, thus making their starting point and original homeland southern Transylvania. In the last chapter, there are two more exact indications on the geographical area: Kesarion Breb belongs “to the fair-haired stock dwelling below the Om Mountain – the Man Mountain”²¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981,

¹⁰ Original Romanian text: “fiule, a sosit pentru tine ceasul” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 68).

¹¹ Original Romanian text: “mai vrednic ca să te jertfesc” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 68).

¹² Original Romanian text: “să desfaci din tine și puterile cele tainice: dar asemenea învățământ primejdios nu se poate câștiga decât acolo unde este fântâna fără fund, prin care poți străbate pe tărâmul celălalt” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 68).

¹³ Original Romanian text: “Vreau să știu care-i taina ei și dacă este o taină nouă” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 68).

¹⁴ Original Romanian text: “un om ascultător și cu braț tare din neamul dacilor” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 74).

¹⁵ Original Romanian text: “neamuri de vechi pământeni” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 54).

¹⁶ Original Romanian text: “neamurile acestui pământ” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 58).

¹⁷ Original Romanian text: “noroadele de la câmpie” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 64).

¹⁸ Original Romanian text: “pământenii” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 74).

¹⁹ Original Romanian text: “stânile muntenilor noștri” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 74).

²⁰ Original Romanian text: “având bună înțelegere cu barbarii de la câmpie și plătindu-le dajdie” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 386).

²¹ Original Romanian text: “era din neamul oamenilor balani de sub muntele Om” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 386).

p. 387). This made many exegetes believe Sadoveanu is implying the Omu Peak in the Bucegi Mountains of Southern Carpathians.

This is apparently supported by the most precise signal after a few pages. First, one has to take into account the direction: “on that golden morning the two travellers set out northwards, along the hillside”²² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 389) and it keeps the same course: “The path ran north along the slope between precipices and a great silence”²³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 393); a wind is blowing from the same cardinal point: “The next day a north wind was blowing in the fir groves”²⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 393). After one day and a half, “The path ran down to a river named Olt”²⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 395). The river is very real and a good part of the 625 kilometres of its flow goes along both Eastern Carpathians and Southern Carpathians in Southern Transylvania. What comes next is crucial: “The same wind was blowing. Their path ran along the glistening stream”²⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 395). Though not completely explicit, the author is implying they were heading in the same direction, northwards, following the course of the river towards its spring. The two travellers at the end of the novel, Kesarion Breb and his servant Constantin, are abandoning the water course to go up towards the recondite mountain after a four-day journey. In this case, considering the starting point an area below the Omu Peak, the location of the recondite mountain becomes highly improbable to be the very same peak, as they moved away five or six days in a row (north, upstream the river Olt, apparently). Thus, the location of Kogaionon could be in the Eastern Carpathian range in Romania, the native lands of Sadoveanu himself.

Back in 780, after having crossed the Carpathians, on their journey, they will pass through the lands where a while ago the Hun barbarians dwelt, which is historically accurate. Nevertheless, at the time of their journey, 780, these places in the planes are once again inhabited by the natives, says the old prophet (which is historically likely), including Kesarion Breb’s stock having its name originating from a wild mammal inhabiting the low rivers. “Breb” is the European beaver, *castor fiber*, which became extinct at the beginning of nineteenth century in Romania, thus inexistent for quite a while at the time Sadoveanu was writing his novel. Apparently, this is why the author insists on the description of the mammal, as many of his readers presumably had no idea otherwise on what he implies (nor would today): “The brooks there are silent and the wild things that bear the name of your stock build flush with the glistening lake waters below the birches round homes which they batter and reinforce with their tales. It is from them that the people of the plain have learnt to build dams and mud huts”²⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 75). A builder, a knowledgeable maker and unspoken teacher is *breb*, a mason in his own way...

In any case, the planes are not the most familiar and trustworthy regions for the travellers as they are advised to stop only at the folds of the familiar mountaineers. Thus, Sadoveanu introduces a suggestion of the traditional theory of the endurance of the natives over such a vast and geographically diverse terrain: the moving of flocks to or from an alpine pasture. At the end of the novel, Sadoveanu comes back to this in an explicit depiction of the

²² Original Romanian text: “Călătorii porniră de-a lungul costișei spre miază-noapte, prin aurul dimineții.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 388).

²³ Original Romanian text: “Drumul ducea pe costișă și către miezul nopții, îndelung, între prăpăstii și tăceri” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 392).

²⁴ Original Romanian text: “A doua zi sună în brădeturi vânt de miazănoapte” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 392).

²⁵ Original Romanian text: “Drumul se înclină în albia apei care se chiamă Olt” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 394).

²⁶ Original Romanian text: “Bătea același vânt. Urmau calea pe lângă lucirea apei” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 394).

²⁷ Original Romanian text: “Acolo pâraiele tac și sălbăticiunile care poartă numele neamului tău își lădesc în luciul lacurilor, sub mesteceni, căsuțe rotunde pe care le bat și le întăresc cu cozile. De la ei au învățat oamenii de la câmp a face iazuri și bordeie.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 74)

daily reiterated life of Kesarion's six brothers – which is a concise anthropological definition of Romanians through the centuries:

His six brothers were owners of the flocks of those parts and had shepherds and servants at their command. On the grassy plateau named Casele, they had log-houses where the women and children dwelt. The servants that attended to the cattle-sheds and to the stables lived in huts, as was the custom among the mountain people. In late autumn some of the flocks reached as far as the reed-brakes and the low ridges along the banks of the Ister for their winter stay. Masters and servants walked to those places along roads known to them, following the course of the streams.²⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 387)

Once in Calatis, in 780, the travellers have to turn to the service of a Greek sailor to cross the Black and Mediterranean Seas.

The main character present between 780 and 797 in the Carpathian Mountains, in Egypt, in Byzantium, and back in the Carpathian Mountains is the Dacian named Kesarion Breb. Considering that the Dacians have stopped being explicitly attested as an ethnic group under this denomination as early as the fourth century, their appearance in the late eighth century is historically highly improbable. For the apparent historical inadvertence there is a certainty on the impetus that must have driven Mihail Sadoveanu:

I confess I can't make out very well why it should be necessary to prove our exclusive Latin origin and the nobility we derive from our Roman descendance in order to deserve the badge a great people. I would rather rejoice in our Geto-Dacian origin for those old-time Europeans – the Geto-Dacians – enjoyed an excellent reputation among the ancients while praises were not alone meted out to the Romans. For myself, I feel honoured to be descended from the natives who stood under the protection of ancient Burebista.²⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 29)

Historians may well assert that the race of our forebears is descended from Trajan and Rome. Although I consider the language as an important factor of communication, I nevertheless believe that we should seek our origins deeper in the past, when songs and legends clothed the same feelings in different words. I may state that our nation is indeed descended from Rome but more especially from the Carpathians³⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 29).

Having all of these taken into account, to us the most revealing detail is the description of the Dacian magus from the first chapter; the geologist professor Stamatina allegedly encountered this Dacian magus in the recondite mountain of the Carpathians one day in late March, at the vernal equinox a few years back 1926, and he is presumably none-other than the 796 Kesarion Breb at the end of the novel:

²⁸ Original Romanian text: "Șase frați ai lui se aflau stăpâni ai turmelor din acele locuri, având sub ascultarea lor ciobani și argați. Pe plaiul care se chema Casele, aveau așezări durate din bârne, unde stăteau muierile și copiii. Slujitorii, lângă staule și grajduri, trăiau în colibe după rânduiala muntenilor. Unele turme ajungeau la sfârșitul toamnei, pentru iernatic, în stufurile și grindurile Istrului. Și stăpânii și slujitorii umblau până acolo pe drumuri cunoscute, prin marginea apelor." (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 386)

²⁹ Original Romanian text: "Mărturisesc că nu înțeleg tocmai bine de ce e nevoie să se dovedească latinitatea noastră exclusivă și noblețea noastră de la Roma, ca să devenim un mare popor. Aș înclina să mă bucur mai mult de o origine geto-dacică, întrucât acești vechi pământeni, geto-dacii, se bucurau de o reputație excelentă în lumea antică, pe când despre romani nu se poate vorbi numai cu laude. În sfârșit, în ce mă privește, mă simt onorat de a fi coborât din băștinașii care erau sub oblăduirea vechiului nostru Burebista." (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 18)

³⁰ Original Romanian text: "Pot spune istoricii că neamul părinților noștri se trage de la Traian și de la Roma. Socotind limba ca un factor important de comunicare, am totuși încredințarea că trebuie să ne căutăm noi pe noi înșine mai în adânc și mai în trecut, când cântecele și legendele traduceau cu alte vocabule același sentiment. Pot spune că neamul nostru se trage de la Roma, dar mai cu seamă se trage de la Carpați." (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 18)

I reached his seat – a place where three live springs burst forth from below the rock, fretting like the vipers of his undying wisdom and whispering his name in a language other than man's ever changing speech. And this is what I saw: the ashes of old still lay on the deserted hearth; the hound of the earth bayed deep down beneath; I went in and found him, pale and stately, in his rock-hewn seat. In his right hand he held an ivory staff. Moss had overgrown his tresses and his chest; his beard came down to the ground and his eyelashes to his breast; above him, chasing each other in circles, a white and a black raven flapped their weary wings... "Blind he was, under the burden of this sign of the days and the nights, but the golden figures still twinkled under his vaulted brow, mysteriously recording the time."³¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 89)

What Sadoveanu is doing in 1933 in this fragment is called intertextuality, as he is imitating up to the point of simply copying the lyrics from the 1875 poem *Strigoi* [Ghosts] by the most renowned and revered Romanian poet, the romantic Mihai Eminescu. A predominantly literal translation:

Now he reaches the dark forest, girdling / the old mountain / split with waters bubbling and sparkling / on the black rock. / At a forsaken fireside old grey ashes / linger on the hearth. / In the depth of the forest, barks / the Dog of Earth, / like the legendary ox, lowing, breaking / the silence. / And stiff and pale, an eerie figure sits / on a cairn of rocks; / a priest of old gods, crozier clutched / in cold fingers, / sits as he has sat for centuries, forgotten / even by Death, / the hair on his head and chest overgrown / with moss and lichen, / his eyebrows falling down towards his waist, / his grey beard to the ground. / And he has sat, sightless, motionless, day and night, / his feet firmly fixed now to the rocks, / only his mind / alive still, counting and recounting / the numberless days. / Over his head circle two ravens, one black, / the other white, / flying weary wings.³² (Eminescu, 1980, p. 57-59)

And a more imaginative, figurative translation:

Reaching at last the forest that clothes the rising hills, / Where does a sweet spring murmur, well out from 'neath a stone, / Where grey with scattered ashes an old hearth stands alone, / Where far off in the forest the earth-hound sounds his tone / And with his distant barking the midnight silence fills. / Upon a rocky ledge, quite stiff and ashen faced, / There sits, with crutch in hand, a priest of pagan creed / For ages sits he thus, by death forgot indeed, / Moss growing on his forehead and on his breast long weed, / His beard reaching to the ground, his eyebrows to his waist. / Blindly thus for ages he sits both day and night, / Until his feet have grown one with the stone at last, / Numbering the days that numberless have passed, / While over him are circling in endless circles vast / Two crows on weary wings, one black, the other white. (Eminescu, 1978)

³¹ Original Romanian text: "am ajuns până la locul său, într-un loc unde trei izvoare vii saltă de sub piatră zbatându-se ca viperele înțelepciunii celei fără de moarte și murmurându-i numele într-o altă limbă decât cea schimbătoare a oamenilor. Ascultați ce-am văzut. Cenușa veche sta încă în vatra părăsită; lătra în adâncime cățelul pământului; am intrat și l-am găsit palid și semeț în jălțul dăltuit în stâncă. Cu dreapta ținea toiagul de fildeș. Avea mușchi în plete și pe sân; îi ajungea barba la pământ și genele la piept; deasupra-i fâlfăia gonindu-se în roate; *Cu-aripile-ostenite, un alb și-un negru corb...* Sub povara acestui semn al zilelor și-al nopților stătea orb, însă numerele de aur continua să clipească sub bolta frunții lui, scriind misterios timpurile." (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 38)

³² Original Romanian text: "Ajuns-a el la poala de codru-n munții vechi, / Isvoară vii murmură și saltă de sub piatră, / Colo cenușa sură în părăsita vatră, / În codri-adânci cățelul pământului tot latră, / Lătrat cu glas de zimbru răsună în urechi. / Pe-un jilț tăiat în stâncă stă țăpân, palid, drept, / Cu cârja lui în mână, preotul cel păgân; / De-un veac el șede astfel - de moarte-uitat, bătrân, / În plete-i crește mușchiul, și mușchi pe a lui sân, / Barba-n pământ i-ajunge și genele la piept... / Așa fel zi și noapte de veacuri el stă orb, / Picioarele lui vechie cu piatra-mpreunate, / El numără în gându-i zile nenumărate, / Și fâlfăie deasupra-i, gonindu-se în roate, / Cu-aripile-ostenite un alb și-un negru corb." (Eminescu, 1998, p. 67)

Sadoveanu could have easily imagined an original detailed narrative of the Dacian magus, as he was an undisputed master of a plentiful descriptive style, something he resorts to so very often within *The Golden Bough* itself. Had he intended to tacitly pastiche any other Romanian writer picturing an ancient priest, he could have chosen Lucian Blaga for example, with his 1921 poem *The Death of Pan*. But it is obvious Sadoveanu selected Eminescu's poem, and he undoubtedly did so for a reason. The motivation for his option may lie not in the Dacian magus itself, as his copied picture could simply act as a clue, a gateway to distinguish the hidden rationale. And that motivation could be found in the protagonist of Eminescu's poem, the foreign king passing through Danubian Dacian lands, Arald (which, in his manuscripts, he spells Harald, a spelling preferred by the English translation just the same). Even if Eminescu is calling Arald "the King of Avari" (historically these nomadic warriors did indeed distantly rule over the lands of the former Dacia as late as 790), what he actually alludes to, considering the repeated mentioning of Odin as Arald's supreme God, the itinerary of his hero Arald crossing Volga and Dniester rivers, is

the notorious Harald Hafdagár [...] the founder of Norway that, during his warfare, observed the same itinerary Eminescu describes [in the poem]. The figure of this hero-king has made wealthy the romantic literature of France and of Germany. It is interesting that Harald – in the manuscripts Eminescu calls him Harald too as well (ms. B. A. R. 2262, f. 166) – was harmonized in addition by other foreign writers in narrations which take place within our country – *on the Dacian land*, as Eminescu says. The French Lerebours for example wrote in the year 1825 a tragedy entitled *Harald*, where the Nordic king, just as in *The Ghosts*, falls in love with a girl from the regions of the old Dacian countries.³³ (Jura, 1933, p. 21 - our translation)

Most of Eminescu's three-part poem deals indeed with the tragic love story between king Arald and a Dacian princess, Maria, thus a first, superficial layer of its lecture could be confined to an impressive adaptation of previous European gothic writing. However, its essence lies elsewhere. In Eminescu's poem, on the realms of ancient Dacia, Odin dies at the same time with Arald. In this way the significance of the poem goes much further beyond the love story and the ghostly theme. For it is not only Odin dying at the end of the poem. In his desperate attempt to resurrect the lifeless bride-princess Maria, Arald appeals to the help of the Dacian magus of the ancient god Zalmoxis, in a land otherwise strongly Christianized, as the poem makes it ever so clear. Neither Odin nor Zalmoxis will be able to bring back to life what is already dead. In a poem that arguably has the most Christian elements in all of Eminescu's creation, either in explicit images and symbolism or in hidden linguistic adaptation of old religious books narrative style (see Picioruș, 2017), both Norsemen Arald and Dacian Maria, both Odin and Zalmoxis will vanish; or, as Eminescu renders it at the end of the poem, the ghosts of the defunct are forever entombed by the temple's closing gates: "Lost for all eternity within the tomb's constraint" (Eminescu, 1978), whilst the Dacian magus turns to stone, in a posture identical to that of the last Dacian priest discovered in Sadoveanu's novel in the Carpathians a few years back, in 1926:

³³ Original Romanian text: "este vestitul Harald Hafdagár [...] întemeietorul Norvegiei și care pe timpul războaielor pe care le-a purtat, a urmat același drum pe care ni-l descrie Eminescu [în poem]. Figura acestui rege-erou, a îmbogățit întreaga literatură romantică a Franței și a Germaniei. Interesant este că Harald – în manuscrise Eminescu îl numește tot *Harald* (ms. B. A. R. 2262, f. 166) – a mai fost încadrat și de alți scriitori străini în istorisiri care se petrec în cuprinsul țării noastre – *pe-al Daciei pământ*, cum zice Eminescu. Francezul Lerebours de pildă, a scris în anul 1825 o tragedie intitulată *Harald*, în care regele nordic, ca și în *Strigoii*, iubește o fată din locurile vechilor țări dacice." (Jura, 1933, p. 21)

The Seer now lowers his eyebrows, the world fades from / His feet into the granite again enrooted grow, / Numbering the days that numberless did flow, / Harold in his failing mind a tale of long ago, / While soaring o'er his head two crows: one black, one white. / Upon his rocky ledge, upright and ashen faced, / There sits with crutch in hand the priest of pagan creed. / For ages sits he thus, by death forgot indeed, / Moss growing on his forehead and on his breast long weed, / His beard reaching to the ground, his eyebrows to his waist.³⁴ (Eminescu, 1978)

As early as 1910, a Romanian scholar named Al. Bogdan noticed the presence of Odin's ravens right round the Dacian magus and that is of little surprise, for in an earlier poem by Eminescu, dating 1872, *Odin și poetul* [Odin and the poet], Odin is identified with Zalmoxis, as the last Dacian king, Decebalus, forever lives among the Gods in Valhalla. The easy explanation usually presented is the long-lasting historical confusion between the Gets and the Goths due to the sixth century Eastern Roman Empire Gothic historian Jordanes. Be that as it may for Eminescu, we believe there is still another rationale for Mihail Sadoveanu's preferred intertextuality in the very first chapter of his novel (it is exactly the lyric with the ravens that Sadoveanu renders evident in his intertextual epic narrative writing, by separating it in a single line and writing it in italics). He deliberately turned to Eminescu's poem for he may have intended to bring together the last Dacian magus and the most famous Norsemen not only because their Gods vanished when facing Christianity, but for another reason yet.

2. The Varangians

Most of the novel's chapters (fourth to sixteenth) cover the plot taking place in Byzantium, 787-793/797. Among others, the novel presents a collective personage little expounded by literary criticism: the Swedish Vikings from the medieval Byzantium. The Varangian Guard was an elite unit of the Byzantine army, composed mainly by Swedish Norsemen. They were first accounted for as serving in the Byzantine army in 874 and the official constitution of the Guard took place in 988. Nevertheless, the elite personal guard of the Byzantine Emperor is already active in Sadoveanu's *The Golden Bough* as early as 787 (at least). Although a completely minor character, in a story where the focus is on the Byzantines and on the Dacians, Mihail Sadoveanu dwells upon it, explicitly mentioning the Varangians no less than seven times. All their occurrences in the diegesis are rendered next, with a minimum of contextualization.

Their early appearance in the novel (Chapter 4) is consistent with the logic of their (later) historical institutional status. The one gazing, alongside the entire population of Byzantium, is the protagonist Kesarion Breb. The narrator is external, omniscient. "Heading the pageantry were great dignitaries who carried the imperial ensigns: the sword, the rod and the globe of gold. Close to the Basilissa, companies of Varangians and Maglabites in gold armour and helmets kept guard with spears and battle axes"³⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 82).

Once introduced, their second explicit occurrence appears much later, Chapter 13 being dedicated almost entirely to them. The Varangians are graphically and minutely described, making use of a humoristic and ironic narrative style. The present article will select some particulars of their copious literary representation.

³⁴ Original Romanian text: "Bătrănu-și pleacă geana și iar rămâne orb, / Picioarele lui vechie cu piatra se-mpreună / El numără în gându-i și anii îi adună, / Ca o poveste-uitată Arald în minte-i sună, / Și peste capu-i zboară un alb ș-un negru corb. / Pe jilțul lui de piatră înțepenește drept / Cu cârja lui cea veche preotul cel păgân, / Și veacuri înainte el șede-uitat, bătrân, / În plete-i crește mușchiul și mușchi pe a lui sân, / Barba-n pământ i-ajunge și genele în piept." (Eminescu, 1998, p. 74)

³⁵ Original text: "În fruntea alaiului dregători măreți purtau semnele împărătești: sabia, varga și globul de aur. În preajma Vasilisei, teorii de varangi și maglabiți țineau strajă cu sulii și securi, cu zale și căști de aur". (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 82)

The fragment “During the reign of the Issaurian emperors, the most reliable and most favoured guards were the Varangians”³⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 291) acknowledges the external, omniscient narrator. This assertion poses a crucial, sensitive problem. Mihail Sadoveanu was very much aware, familiar and well informed on the history of the Byzantium Empire depicted in his novel. Much of the information introduced in his story is historically accurate, a testimony he did his best to be persuasive, convincing. The two Emperors, Constantine VI and his mother Irene of Athens were real historical figures, ruling between 780 and 802, the last two Emperors of the Isaurian dynasty. Sadoveanu places the Byzantine section of his story at the heart of their ruling and many of the happenings of the novel render real historical events. And yet in the case of the Varangians the reader is facing a disjointed historical inaccuracy. The Isaurian dynasty started in 717, a moment when there were no Varangians in Constantinople; even if Sadoveanu uses the syntagma “During the reign of the Issaurian emperors” having in mind only the last two Emperors of the dynasty, the characters of his novel, there is still a harsh historical imprecision, as there was no Varangian guard in 787 either. At the end of the 8th century, the first Viking ships reach the Kievan Rus state in the east. And raids in the west, on the British Isles, may have taken place as early as 750, the first significant Viking “achievement” being the plundering of Lindisfarne, on the north-east shore of England, in 793. East or West, the Vikings were simply not historically present in Constantinople when Sadoveanu presents them as a traditional military unit of the Emperor. To consider he did so out of ignorance or for the sake of exoticism simply does not add up. Throughout his close (ostentatious?) depiction of the minor character turned into the collective protagonist of an entire chapter, Sadoveanu proves he was very much familiar with historical, anthropological, geographical and social features of the Varangians.

For their journey back-and-forth Constantinople, he favours the less-likely western route (perhaps because it was a much more familiar mirroring of the seamanship the Vikings were famed for):

And so at such times as the armours were threatened with widowhood, one of the captains got on board an imperial vessel and sailed to the Pillars of Hercules and thence into the big ocean, veering along the shores of Gaul and heading for the seas that more often than not spread under the mist and fog. / It was there – in Daneland and Scandinavia – that the imperial messenger found the bodies that he needed. Among the warriors that still worshiped Odin there were many that dreamt of the southern paradise of the Greek empire.³⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, pp. 291-293)

Mihail Sadoveanu indicates the reasons behind such a long endeavour: sweet wine, dark-eyed women, gold galore, steady job as mercenaries irrespective of the figure of the ever-changing Emperor. All in all, the author builds up a vivid, yet stereotypical portrait of the medieval Viking. “These were fair-haired, blue-eyed men that came from the frozen northern regions. Tall, broad-shouldered and always frowning, they fulfilled their task silently and in impeccable order. Their cone-shaped helmets [...]”³⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 291).

³⁶ Original text: “În timpul domniei Isaurienilor, cei mai de credință și mai ocrotiți străjeri stăteau varangii” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 290).

³⁷ Original Romanian text: “Deci, din vreme în vreme, când armurile erau amenințate de văduvie, unul din căpitani se suia într-o corabie împărătească și călătorea către columnele lui Iraelie, ieșind în oceanul cel mare, apoi cotea pe lângă țărmul Galiei și intra în mările cele care stau mai mult sub negură. Acolo, la Dania și la Scandinavia, solul împărăției găsea trupurile de care avea nevoie. Între războinicii închinători încă lui Odin, se aflau destui care visau raiul de la miazăzi al împărăției grecești.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, pp. 290-292)

³⁸ Original Romanian text: “Erau bărbați blonzi, cu ochii albaștri, veniți din ținuturile înghețate de la miezul-noptii. Largi în spete, nalți și încruntați, își îndeplineau în tăcere și cu o rânduială neînduplecată slujba. Coifurile lor conice...” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 290)

There are two details of particular interest introduced by Mihail Sadoveanu in his unusual long presentation of the Varangians of 790 Constantinople: their inherent formal Christianization “So the captain measured their height and took them along. As they floated on the waters he taught them to make the sign of the cross and say the name of Jesus and the usual acclamations”³⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 293); and their shadowing, less obvious, but constant imperial power as the series of ever changing brilliant imperial figures never ceased: “for thus the true masters of the Sacred Palace were the Varangian guards”⁴⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 293).

Their most notable action in chapter 13 (and in the entire novel) is taking decisive action in a plot to overturn the ruling of the Empress Irene. Making use of stylistic techniques of irony turned into bantering when alluding to the Varangians’s extreme lack of volubility due to a certain specific lack of deep thinking, Mihail Sadoveanu introduces an absent distant character suggesting the conspiracy: Strategos Lachonodracon, a once celebrated military commander, now living in exile. If needed, this is yet another argument for Sadoveanu’s correct documentation, as the personage was a real historical figure: the distinguished Byzantine general Michael Lakchanodrakon, having served from about 763 under the iconoclast Isaurian Emperor Constantine V as a fanatical perpetrator of persecutions against monks, thus becoming a military governor; and under the Emperor Leon IV he was a successful military commander against the Arabs from 778 to 781. Deposed by the iconophile Empress Irene of Athens in 782 he re-appeared in 790 to help Constantine VI in toppling his mother Irene, with the aid of the Armenian troops. Thus, as a magistros, he took part in the disastrous campaign against the Bulgars in 792, finding his end on the battlefield. All these details of his biography are specified or alluded to by Sadoveanu in his fictional story, with a single inaccuracy: the Varangians as a much needed helping hand. The Varangians are those effectively deposing the Empress Irene interrupting divine service at Saint Sophia. And the Varangians are those braking into the chambers of the terrified Constantine VI acclaiming him as new Emperor, taking care of the formalities as well: “Let the insignia of the Empire be brought”⁴¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 307). “I beg you to continue to protect the holy icons”⁴² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 307) the deposed Empress implores with prevision.

“The true masters of the Sacred Palace”, having secured their position and power, appear in the following two chapters yet again as marginal characters, continuing their formal institutional role and reason, serving as professional bodyguards of the new Emperor. The narrator is external and omniscient: “In the vanguard was a company of Maglabites with spears. Next came the Emperor flanked by Varangians.”⁴³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, pp. 321-323); “The next day, with the Emperor going out to war, there was a great stir in the City. The Varangians ranged themselves staunchly around him; they had on their armour and coats of mail, and changed their weapons”⁴⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 367).

In the last but one chapter, the Varangians have two more appearances. The narrator is a character of the novel (a vague witness): “‘Most enlightened sir’, brother Theodorus of Sakkoution wrote to Kesarion Breb in the year 797, ‘according to your order, we have kept your servant Constantin in our monastery, and now that the appointed time has come, we are

³⁹ Original Romanian text: “Deci căpitanul îi măsura în înălțime și-i lua cu el. Cât pluteau pe apă îi învăța să facă cruce și să rostească numele lui Iisus și aclamațiile consacrate.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 292)

⁴⁰ Original Romanian text: “căci astfel adevărații stăpâni de la Palatul Sfânt sunt săbiile străjerilor” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 292).

⁴¹ Original Romanian text: “Să se aducă aicea semnele Împărăției!” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 306).

⁴² Original Romanian text: “te rog a urma să ocrotești sfintele icoane” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 306).

⁴³ Original Romanian text: “Drumul îl deschidea o eterie de maglabiți, cu sulii. Împăratul venea după aceea, între varangi.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, pp. 320-322)

⁴⁴ Original Romanian text: “A doua zi, în Cetate, a fost mare zvon pentru ieșirea Împăratului la război. Varangii s-au alcătuit cu mare strășnicie în juru-i, având pe ei platoșele și zălele și sunând din arme.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 366)

sending him to you with this missive”⁴⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 375). The monk tells from within the compounds of a monastery on the savage warfare of the Varangians under the command of the Emperor Constantine VI against the Armenian troops loyal to the general Alexios Mosele, blinded by the Emperor (yet again, reflection of real historical figures and events in 792-793): “The common soldiers were ripped open with swords and beaten with maces and their leaders were tied by the Varangians to the tails of the camels and were torn into four pieces”⁴⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 377). Thus, the Varangians exceed their limited ground of a protective bodyguard, having been used as an elite unit or shock troops. Noteworthy is that they were used as such not only in open battle to suppress a military armed rebellion, but, much more revealing, in an almost surrealistic siege and fight against a monastery and its monks:

It was then that a thing happened which could have been easily surmised. Discarding all prayer and humility the Isaurian foamed at the mouth and issued orders to Varangians. The carts with engines of war came up from behind; sixty servants raised the battering rams against the gates and began to batter them, and before long there were swords and spears in the church. They set fire to the cells. They broke into the cellars and the casks were pierced through. The soldiers dragged our saintly father to the Emperor’s feet by the beard. Thus did this saintly man give up the ghost.⁴⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 383)

Here Mihail Sadoveanu is fictionalizing, but not without reason. His Holiness Plato, the monastery Sakkoudion and the happenings of summer 796 he presents so vividly are echoes of the real historical monk, Plato the Studite or Plato of Sakkoudion, founder of the monastery of Sakkoudion on Mount Olympus in Bithynia. He was an iconodule unbending supporter, perhaps most famous for his stand against the iconoclast Emperor Constantine VI in the summer of 796, opposing to the imperial second marriage, even if the second wife was nobody else but Plato’s own niece. His intransigence led to his own imprisonment while his monastic supporters were persecuted and exiled. Ultimately, he died much later, in 814, and was canonized by the Church. Sadoveanu aggrandizes the consequences of the incident simply depicting other similar real historical actions of Constantine VI and of most of the Issaurian dynasty Emperors in their fervour against icons, monks, and monasteries. With a notable exception: Irene of Athens. And the Varangians as a fictitious instrument, of course...

Their last occurrence closes, bitterly ironic, a cycle. They betray the acting Emperor, Constantine VI, deposing him and enthroning another, his mother, the Empress Irene.

A year had gone by since His Holiness had passed away – the time needed for the cycle to conclude – and there was much unrest and commotion at Byzantium. Stavrikios and Eutykhios, the counsellors of the all-glorious Empress, many a night put their heads together, for long conferring with each other. They gave the Varangians, the Maglabites and the Scholarians as many coins as were needed for their love for Constantine to lessen.⁴⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 383)

⁴⁵ Original Romanian text: “Prea luate Stăpâne, îi scria cuviosul Teodor de la Sakkoudion, în 797, lui Kesarion Breb; după porunca pe care ai lăsat-o, am ținut aici, la noi, pe servul domniei-tale Constantin; iar acum, sosind ora hotărâtă, ți-l trimitem cu această carte.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 374).

⁴⁶ Original Romanian text: “Oamenii de rând au fost tăiați cu săbiile și bătuți cu buzduganele, iar pe mai-marii lor i-au legat varangii de cozile cămilelor, rupându-i în patru.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 376)

⁴⁷ Original Romanian text: “Atunci s-a întâmplat acel lucru care nu era greu să-l bănuiesc. Din rugăciunea și umiliința lui, Isaurianul s-a sculat spumând și a dat poruncă varangilor. Dindărăt au sosit carele cu unelte de război; șaizeci de slujitori au ridicat la porți berbecule și au început a bate. Curând au intrat în biserică săbiile și sulile. La chilii s-a pus foc. Pivnițele au fost sparte și butoaiele sfredelite. Oștenii au târât de barbă pe preasfințitul nostru părinte la picioarele Împăratului. Astfel și-a dat duhul acest bătrân sfânt.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 382)

⁴⁸ Original Romanian text: “N-a trecut decât un an de la adormirea prea sfințitului, adică atât cât trebuie ciclului ca să se încheie, și la Bizanț s-a iscat tulburare și vâlvă. Sfetnicii slăvitei Împărătese, Stavrikie și Eftihie, au stat multe nopți frunte

While Irene is kneeling before icons, Constantine is blinded. The narrative double mirroring internal happenings of the diegesis (dethronement/enthronement under the patronage of icons and the ritual brutal blinding of Constantine VI, just as he did with Alexios Mosele), one can notice, yet again, the close mirroring of real historical events: the Emperor Constantine VI was captured, blinded and imprisoned on 19 August 797 by the supporters of his mother, Irene.

Obviously the Varangians are introduced in Sadoveanu's novel as an instrument for perpetrating the will of the Byzantine Emperor, under the auspices of the internal religious confrontation of iconoclasts and iconophiles, with the victory of the latter, a struggle that defined spiritual lines much beyond the imperial borders. For this Mihail Sadoveanu could have used any other military unit which did historically act at the time as personal bodyguards of the Emperor, two of which are repeatedly mentioned by the author, even in an enumeration alongside the Varangians at their last appearance: the Maglabites and the Scholarians. Thus, a natural problem presents itself: why the Varangians?

3. The Vlachs

There is a widespread belief, almost a linguistic consensus, that the word "Vlach", an exonym for naming Romanians, seemingly has a Germanic origin. Nevertheless, there are other views. According to two Romanian scholars, Gherghel (1920) and Popa-Lisseanu (1941), Genesios is the author in whose tenth century work *On the Reign of the Emperors* (Book IV) the word "Blachernae" is mentioned for the very first time, when referring to a sixth century church from Constantinople, The Church of the Virgin from Blachernae neighbourhood:

And so the civil officials who carried out the examination also decreed that henceforth the punishment of the accused, even though it was more of a benefit, was to be the following: on the anniversary of the restoration of Orthodoxy, they were to lead the litany procession with lit candles from the Church of the Virgin at Blachernai. This was enforced for many years, indeed for the rest of their lives, and in the congregation held in the Great Church the heterodox had to endure the condemnation of their own detestable apostasy and the celebration of Orthodoxy. (Genesios, 1998, p. 76)

It was not, by far, an obscure church, as one can find out from *Glossary of Terms, Places, and Peoples* at the end of the Australian edition of the English translation of the tome: "Blachernai: The region comprising the northwestern corner of Constantinople. The Church of the Virgin that stood there, a fifth-century basilica, was the most famous of all the churches to her honor in that existed in the City. See R. Janin, EM, pp. 161-171" (Genesios, 1998, p. 121).

Mihail Sadoveanu uses the word "Blachernes"⁴⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 82) in chapter four, the very first chapter of the Byzantium section of his novel. Once in Byzantium the protagonist Kesarion Breb is walking along its streets getting familiar with its most important palpable achievements. There are ten individual constructions or places the author mentions: the Halkis Palace, the Augustaion forum with the equestrian statue of Justinian, the hippodrome, the Hevdomon and the Blachernes (suburbs or neighbourhoods of Constantinople), the great wall built in the days of Emperor Constantine and of Attila, Saint Sophia, the Seven Towers, the Golden Gate and Valen's aqueduct. Six chapters onwards the author resumes the word, rendering a historical account. After having closed the works of the

lângă frunte ca să se sfătuiască. Au dăruit varangilor și maglabiților și sholarilor atâtea sigle câte trebuiau ca dragostea lor pentru Constantin să se împuțineze." (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 382)

⁴⁹ Original Romanian text: "Vlaherne" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 80).

Second Council of Nicaea (otherwise known as the last of the first seven ecumenical councils), restoring the use and veneration of icons, the bishops have one more extra meeting in the capital city of the Empire, so that the Christ-loving Basilisa, Irene the Empress, could attend as well. “The procession reached the Blacherne Magnaura and the holy bishops went up the marble steps...”⁵⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 213). In this case Sadoveanu names the Palace of Blachernae, an imperial residence in the suburb of Blachernae, built around 500 AD and used for protocol in the ninth century, including for the so-called Eighth Session (23 October 787) of the Second Council of Nicaea. Unknown to Sadoveanu in 1933, proved by Erich Lamberg (2008-2016) in his monumental works, this extra-session was a late ninth century forgery exactly so that it could include the Empress Irene and her son Constantine VI. The passage only shows, one more time, exactly how accurate Sadoveanu was with the documentation available at the time of writing the novel, using a great abundance of historical records, down to detail. Sadoveanu mentions Blacherne Palaces one more time within the chapter, with seemingly no particular reason. Kesarion Breb is walking through the city with the aim of paying a visit to some acquaintances: “Farther on there were carefully tended gardens again and in the distance the Blacherne palaces could be seen in an angle of the rampart.”⁵¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 231). Three more chapters and we are back at the residence of his acquaintances, Philaret from Amnia, an occasion for the host to name the Blacherne two more times, in the context of his extreme charity to the poor people waiting outside the walls of the palaces: “To the small gate of Blachernes I have sent the slaves”⁵² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 313); “I have asked permission for them to slink to the gate of the Blachernes.”⁵³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 313). In chapter fourteen Blacherne appears for the sixth time. Emperor Constantine VI is acting with extreme cruelty against former friends and close relatives, blinding the general Alexius Moseles with hot red iron, blinding his uncle, monk Nikephoros, by gauging his eyes, cutting off the tongues of his other four uncles, monks Cristophoros, Niketas, Antim and Evdokimos (real historical deeds). The deposed mother-Empress Irene is seemingly inconsolable upon such savagery “the invisible bird proclaimed, flying now to the Seven Towers, now to the Blachernes”⁵⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, 343). The text could have worked without these occurrences but, at the same time, they are not ostentatious, as they are simply naming an ordinary reality of Byzantium. Thus, it is debatable whether Sadoveanu introduced the six occurrences for a reason. One should keep in mind that Sadoveanu is usually using his textual suggestions unobtrusively.

The two Romanian scholars, Gherghel and Popa-Lisseanu, present a *speculation* that the word “Blach/Vlach” is a Greek-Roman originating word, in the Eastern Roman Empire, where “Blachernae” was already in use as early as the sixth century.

Citing two German editions of the Greek original text (Bonn, 1834; Munchen, 1897), the Romanian scholar Ilie Gherghel reproduces an explanation seemingly offered by Genesios on the etymology of “Blachernae”, as a “Scythian” duke called “Blach” having been murdered on that spot in the old times. The author of this article was able to trace the existence of the etymological explanation in the 1834 edition, indeed: “[Blachernae a quodam duce Scytharum Blacherno ibi interfecto nominatae:]” (Genesios, 1834, p. 85) and, at the same time, the inexistence of the etymological explanation in the 1978 de Gruyter edition and in the 1998

⁵⁰ Original Romanian text: “Alaiul a venit la Magnaura Vlahernelor și sfințiile lor au suit (...) treptele de marmură” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 214).

⁵¹ Original Romanian text: “Pe urmă începeau iarăși grădini îngrijite și se zăreau departe, în unghiul zidului cel mare, Vlahernele” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 230).

⁵² Original Romanian text: “La poarta cea mică a Vlahernelor am trimes robi” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 312).

⁵³ Original Romanian text: “-am cerut învoire să-i lase să se strecoare până la poarta Vlahernelor” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 312).

⁵⁴ Original Romanian text: “dădea de veste pasărea nevăzută zburând când la Cele Șapte Turnuri, când la Vlaherne” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 342).

English translation of the chronicle of Genesios. Why it was ignored in the twentieth century is unexplainable.

In any case, to Ilie Gherghel, after having read the work of Genesios, the Suda Lexicon, and other Byzantine works mentioning derivatives of the word “Vlach” as having existed in early Middle Ages (Theophanes, *Cronographia*, Malalas, *Cronographia*, both naming a duke called “Vlach”, either Scythian or Hun), the denomination “Blachernae” (=Vlaherne) of both the neighbourhood and of the Imperial Cathedral from Constantinople *may* have originated from the Vlachs (compounded with “ernos”=offspring) that were already present in the proximity of Constantinople, within a colony, as early as the fifth century, having had come from the “Scythian” lands (Gherghel, 1920, p. 7).

Popa-Lisseanu reinforces the argument of the Greek originating exonym twenty-one years later, citing the work of Genesios in its 1834 Bonn edition, the work of his Romanian predecessor, Ilie Gherghel, and adding more Byzantine historical records of the word and of the people “Vlach”. Notably, the sixth century Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea mentions some one hundred slave-settlers in Sinai, in 536, during the reign of Justinian, coming from a country called Llah. (Popa-Lisseanu, 1941, p. 53). Or Cedrenus, another Byzantine Greek historian, which, in the eleventh century, makes mention of Vlacherichini (=Vlachs on the river Richos) in the years 617-619, thus the very first occurrence of the *people* called Vlachs. They are repeatedly waging war against the Greek city Thessaloniki, either forming an alliance with the Slavs or under the ruling of the Avars. The same people are present in the eighth century, interfering in the inner Byzantine religious battles between the Iconoclasts and the Iconodules. Same Cedrenus mentions that in 976 David (brother of Samuil, ruler of the rebelled Bulgarians) was killed in a specific location by the travelling Vlachs. (Popa-Lisseanu, 1941, pp. 53-54).

One step further, the Romanian scholar Ilie Gherghel suggests that the Varangians (Vikings mostly from modern-day Sweden), as traders, settlers and members of the personal guard of the Byzantine Basileus (Emperor) spread the word “Blach/Vlach” to the Slavic and Germanic speaking tribes/people. He starts from the form “Blokumanaland” (=terra Blachorum) which he found in the works of the Icelandic chronicler Snorri Sturlesson, presenting news about a country of the Vlachs.

That this denomination, collected by the author of the *Edda* probably at the mouth of Normand mercenaries from the Byzantine court, reflects much more ancient times, is easy to understand. And that the Northmen came to meet us so soon finds its reasoning in their early penetration toward Constantinople, going round Europe both by the sea and by the rivers Dvina and Dnieper towards the beacon of the European culture in those ages. (our translation, Gherghel, 1920, p. 12)

There are several Scandinavian written records mentioning “Blakumen” or “Blokumenn”, most famous, perhaps, the rune stone from Gotland raised around 1050 by a Varangian couple in the memory of one of their sons, treacherously murdered by these Blakumen while travelling abroad. Several historians identify these people with the Vlachs (see Pintescu, 2011 for a thorough debate), which is historically and geographically plausible. If so, the hypothesis of Ilie Gherghel is thus supported by historical written records of Varangians actually having used the exonym Vlachs.

There is no doubt that contacts between Varangians and Vlachs existed in Middle Ages, in various circumstances and places, sometimes fighting side by side, sometimes fighting against each other, according to shifting historical contexts. In 971, according to Ioannis Scylitzae, the Varangians of Sveinhald (Sviatoslav), fighting against the Emperor John I

Tzimiskes, had their troupes encircled in the fortress of Durostorum and were able to survive being supplied with grains by the local sedentary population from the left bank of the Danube, presumably the Vlachs. In 1019 Vlachs ("Blokumenn") from nowadays Moldova fought against the Varangians on the Alta River, not far from Kiev, helping a local leader. And so on.

At the end of presenting these data one *may* come to accredit the syllogism that "Vlach" was a Greek (Byzantine) originating exonym for naming Romanians and that Varangians having travelled to Constantinople met the population and got acquainted to the exonym which they later spread to Slavs and other Germanic people on their never-ending long journeys.

One cannot know if Mihail Sadoveanu was acquainted in 1933 with the linguistic and historical *speculation* presented by Ilie Gherghel in 1920 (and later defended in 1923 and 1927). But it is *possible* for Mihail Sadoveanu to have introduced this character, the Varangians, improbable temporally in 787 in Byzantium, slipping them down in history, precisely because he may have had knowledge (or, at least, intuition) on their responsibility in re-naming as Vlachs the otherwise scarcely documented Romanians of the Middle Ages.

4. The Golden Bough

The most challenging enterprise is to distinguish Sadoveanu's mastermind for naming his novel *The Golden Bough*. To this day endless attempts ended with vague inferences. It is far easier to identify the incongruities within apparent resemblances, the lack of congeniality within tempting analogies. The ultimate affinity eludes.

The immediate reflex is to turn to James Frazer's 1890 *The Golden Bough*. If we are to relate to the ancient Latin ritual which most famously is the starting point for the Scotsman's comparative study, let us quote it:

In this sacred grove there grew a certain tree round which at any time of the day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. In his hand he carried a drawn sword, and he kept peering warily about him as if at every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. He was a priest and a murderer; and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. Such was the rule of the sanctuary. A candidate for the priesthood could only succeed to office by slaying the priest, and having slain him, he retained office till he was himself slain by a stronger or a craftier. (...) Within the sanctuary at Nemi grew a certain tree of which no branch might be broken. Only a runaway slave was allowed to break off, if he could, one of its boughs. Success in the attempt entitled him to fight the priest in single combat, and if he slew him he reigned in his stead with the title of King of the Wood (*Rex Nemorensis*). According to the public opinion of the ancients the fateful branch was that Golden Bough which, at the Sibyl's bidding, Aeneas plucked before he essayed the perilous journey to the world of the dead. (Frazer, 1894, p. 9-10)

It was obvious to all honest exegetes there is nothing at all of this bloody petty ritual in Sadoveanu's novel. The necessity of a vigorous King of the Wood to be killed whilst still "green" in order to make room for another King of the Wood at the plenitude of his physical strength to take his place simply does not exist. On the contrary, the thirty-second Dacian high priest is most venerated while decrepit due to old age and Kesarion Breb will become the thirty-third Deceneus as a result of a complex spiritual initiatory journey, without any need for a murderous confrontation which would only be thoroughly inappropriate. At the end of the novel, we find the old priest still alive, after having served for fifty-three years, secretly whispering to his successor the final words and professions in the silence of the cave.

If we are to turn to the metaphorical symbolism of Frazer's exposition, the dying and reviving god, the parallelism could be supported to some extent. Repeatedly, perhaps

ostentatiously, Sadoveanu makes reference to resurrection in various ways. In the first chapter the geologist professor Stamatin allegedly encountered the last Dacian magus in the recondite mountain of the Carpathians a day in late March at the vernal equinox a few years back 1926. In the second chapter, year 780, the Zalmoxian prophet is performing the secret ceremony at about the same time: “It was the ancient sign of the initiated, which in the remote valleys where the waters run smoothly the priests of the new law, Jesus’ law, made over the people at the same hour, as they proclaimed the Resurrection”⁵⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 63). In the last chapter, in the year 796, Kesarion Breb leaves his home in the Dacian lands for the last time presumably just before the autumnal equinox, in mid-September as we are carefully informed. What is even more, “there was no returning from the journey he was now undertaking”⁵⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 387). Significantly, he visits the churchyard and the graves of his forbears before his last ascension to the recondite mountain. All along his journey he is facing cold breath, purple-blue sky, fog, storm, sleet, with a burst of sun towards the end. What Sadoveanu is ever so skilfully suggesting throughout the chapter is that Kesarion Breb is preparing for his own death and for his own entombing in the cave. The very last words of the novel leave no room for misinterpretation: “He raised his arms above them, gazing at them with glazed eyes: he knew he was to be the last servant of the recondite mountain”⁵⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 397). One God is dying, and the only resurrection will be the resurrection of a new God; which, to Sadoveanu, is the same, unique and eternal.

Another luring similarity is with Vergil’s *Aeneid*. And this is mostly because the journey Kesarion Breb is undertaking to Byzantium is undoubtedly a descent into the Inferno, the reputed and cultured Romanian essayist Alexandru Paleologu dealing with the issue in his 1978 tome: “*The Golden Bough*, Sadoveanu’s novel, is a *descensus ad inferos*. Evidently, the Byzantium is the Inferno”⁵⁸ (translation ours, Paleologu, 1978, p. 52). This is voiced explicitly by Sadoveanu again and again all along his novel: “rot crawling with maggots lies beneath the light”⁵⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 83); “the dry things of the earth”⁶⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 91); “In the Byzantium of those days putrescent licentiousness spread such a stench (...) Orgies, double-dealing and brothels gnawed at the world like leprosy”⁶¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 117); “the demons” of Byzantium: intrigue, greed for silver, injustice, violence, body rotten to the core⁶² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 143); “as if the imperial phantoms of the palaces – princes without tongue or head, or with hands or legs amputated, or again those distorted by poison – were returning to the place where they had experienced the delights of debauchery and the cold sweat of death”⁶³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 211); “Corpses and refuse gave off fumes in the side streets; under rickety sheds men’s wounds festered; the servants of the Great Papias drove poor wretches to prison, prodding them with their spear-heads; pious monks were on the look-out for heretics and were prone to bash their heads in with their staffs and roll them into the dust

⁵⁵ Original Romanian text: “Era vechiul semn al inițiaților, pe care, în văile depărtate, unde se alină apele, la același ceas, preoții legii celei nouă, a lui Isus, îl făceau asupra poporului, vestind Învierea” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 62).

⁵⁶ Original Romanian text: “Se ducea într-o călătorie fără întoarcere” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 386).

⁵⁷ Original Romanian text: “El ridică asupra or brațele, privindu-i cu ochi înghețați și știind că va fi cel din urmă slujitor al muntelui ascuns” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 396).

⁵⁸ Original text: “*Creanga de aur*, romanul lui Sadoveanu, este un *descensus ad inferos*. Evident, Bizanțul e Infernul” (Paleologu, 1978, p. 52).

⁵⁹ Original Romanian text: “sub lumină viermuesc putreziciunile” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 82).

⁶⁰ Original Romanian text: “uscăciunile pământului” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 90).

⁶¹ Original Romanian text: “În acea lume a Bizanțului hoitul desfrânării împrăștia asemenea miasmă (...) Orgiile, vicieniile și lupanarele rodeau lumea ca o lepră” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 116).

⁶² Original Romanian text: “demonii” Bizanțului: zavistie, lăcomiei de argint, nedreptății, silei, putreziciunii trupesti (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 142).

⁶³ Original Romanian text: “ca și cum fantomele împărătești ale acelor palate, kezarii fără limbi, ori fără capete, ori schilavi de picioare și mâini, ori cei răsușiți de venin, se înturnau la locul deliciilor desfrâului și sudorilor morții” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 210).

on the edge of the vacant lots for the sake of the true faith and in the name of Christ, the Lord of mercy;”⁶⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 223); “For the fiends of greed, envy and falsehood lord it”⁶⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 253); “The indigent of Byzantium are a numberless host”⁶⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 311); “It was uphill work making one’s way through that beggarly mob”⁶⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 357) Leaving room for no misinterpretation, the title of chapter eleven goes like this: “*Under the resplendent Byzantine purple, things none too sweet-smelling become apparent*”⁶⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 249).

Let us follow exactly how Vergil is resorting to the golden bough in his sixth book of the epic poem.

Seven years after the fall of Troy and wanderings in the Mediterranean, Aeneas finally reaches Italian shores and his first visit is to the oracle Sybil of Cumae. Asking her about the entrance to the underworld Aeneas is informed he has to prove he was chosen by the gods and worthy for such a dangerous journey, for very few people did manage both to enter and to return. This being said, Aeneas performs a proper burial for a recently deceased soldier, of whose death he was otherwise unaware (ritualistically a life tribute is paid), and what comes next is much more challenging and needed: acquiring a protective talisman. Sibyl tells Aeneas:

A certain tree
Hides in obscurest shade a golden bough,
Of pliant stems and many a leaf of gold,
Sacred to Proserpine, infernal Queen.
Far in the grove it hides; in sunless vale
Deep shadows keep it in captivity.
No pilgrim to that underworld can pass
But he who plucks this burgeoned, leafy gold;
For this hath beauteous Proserpine ordained
Her chosen gift to be. Whene’er it is culled,
A branch out-leaving in like golden gleam,
A second wonder-stem, fails not to spring.
Therefore go seek it with uplifted eyes! (Vergil. A. 6. 140-152)

Once again, we are tempted to acknowledge there is very little similarity between the two. One might notice the identical seven years Mediterranean periplus before reaching the shores of Italy, respectively Byzantium; even so, for Kesarion Breb the seven years were more of a spiritual intermission in Egypt, of which almost nothing is divulged. However, if the favoured premise would be that Sadoveanu did indeed start from or relate to Vergil’s *Aeneid*, one may distinguish other parallelisms. Thus, for the oracle Sybil of Cumae a perspicacious – and biased – reading can identify a counterpart in Holy Father Plato, the pious prior of Sakkoudion monastery. “I know you have the gift to see in your waking dreams the Lady to whom we all bow at every moment of our lives”⁶⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 103) informs us the Empress Irene, equivalent to Proserpine herself. She tells Plato, exactly as Proserpine must

⁶⁴ Original Romanian text: “În uliți lăaturalnice fumegau leșuri și gunoaie; sub șandramale se coceau leprele; slujitorii marelui papias mânau cu boldurile suliiilor oameni sărmani spre închisori; cuvioși monahi umblau ca să descopere iritici și binevoiau a-i bate cu toiegele în cap, rostogolindu-i în pulbere la marginea medeanurilor, pentru credința cea adevărată și în numele lui Isus, Domnul milei.” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 222)

⁶⁵ Original Romanian text: “stau stăpâni demonii lăcomiei, ai zavistiei, ai minciunii” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 252).

⁶⁶ Original Romanian text: “sărăcimea Bizanțului e o oaste fără număr” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 310).

⁶⁷ Original Romanian text: “Prin atâta calicime era greu de răzbit” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 356).

⁶⁸ Original Romanian text: “Sub strălucirea purperei bizantine se vădesc lucruri nu tocmai bine mirositoare” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 248).

⁶⁹ Original Romanian text: “Știu că ai darul de a vedea, în vis treaz, pe Aceea căreia toți ne închinăm în toate clipele vieții noastre” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 102).

have told Sybil of Cumae, on a chosen gift needed in the Inferno: a wife for Constantine VI from among the virgins of the Empire, so that that future Emperor would amend his wicked ways. “Was father Plato too bold to hope for his strange friend’s advice and support for the common good? ‘Noble sir’, Breb answered, ‘our good words and deeds will yield fruitful a hundredfold at a time when our bodies are nothing but dust. I will consequently give support in everything you bid me do.’”⁷⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 117). The oracle has found its venturesome hero once more.

In Virgil’s *Aeneid* the hero does find the golden bough with the help of a pair of doves:

But, sad at heart with many a doubt and care,
O’erlooks the forest wide; then prays aloud :
“O, that the Golden Bough from this vast grove
Might o’er me shine! For, O Aeolides,
The oracle foretold thy fate, too well!”
Scarce had he spoken, when a pair of doves
Before his very eyes flew down from heaven
To the green turf below; the prince of Troy
Knew them his mother’s birds, and joyful cried,
“O, guide me on, whatever path there be!
In airy travel through the woodland fly,
To where yon rare branch shades the blessed ground.
Fail thou not me, in this my doubtful hour,
O heavenly mother!” So saying, his steps lie stayed,
Close watching whither they should signal give;
The lightly-feeding doves flit on and on,
Ever in easy ken of following eyes,
Till over foul Avernus’ sulphurous throat
Swiftly they lift them through the liquid air,
In silent flight, and find a wished-for rest
On a twy-natured tree, where through green boughs
Flames forth the glowing gold’s contrasted hue.
As in the wintry woodland bare and chill,
Fresh-budded shines the clinging mistletoe,
Whose seed is never from the parent tree
O’er whose round limbs its tawny tendrils twine,—
So shone th’ out-leaving gold within the shade
Of dark holm-oak, and so its tinsel-bract
Rustled in each light breeze. Aeneas grasped
The lingering bough, broke it in eager haste,
And bore it straightway to the Sibyl’s shrine. (Vergil. A. 6. 185-211)

Once Kesarion Breb reaches the destination of his journey as set by Bishop Plato, namely the house of an old friend, Philaret from Amnia (several trials or tests, intellectual and physical, having been successfully surpassed during the journey), the protagonist does find the golden bough in the figure of a sixteen-year old innocent granddaughter, Maria: “«O vision of eternal loveliness!» sighed Kesarion from the depths of his being.”⁷¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p.

⁷⁰ Original Romanian text: “Îndrăzneala părintelui Platon fi-va prea mare, nădăduind de la prietenul său străin sfat și sprijin întru cele bune? - O, domnul meu, răspunse Breb, vorbele și faptele noastre bune vor da rod însutit, atunci când trupul nostru nu va mai fi decât pulbere. Îți voi da deci sprijin la tot ce-mi vei porunci” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 116).

⁷¹ Original Romanian text: “«O! vedenie a frumuseții eterne», suspină Kesarion în adâncul ființei sale” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 190).

191). In order to make sure she is the one indeed, a final test is passed: “he drew a small red skin slipper on the upper of which a white heron about to take wing, its crest tilted to one side, was embroidered in silver thread”⁷² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 191). It fits on her foot. Coincidence (or not), the winged sign is present yet again to make sure the golden bough is indeed found, lingering, ready to be plucked.

The third time the golden bough appears in Vergil’s poem is when Sybil resorts to it to convince the Ferryman, Charon, to allow Aeneas to go further into the Underworld, as Charon was very selective on which souls to make the journey across.

Briefly th’ Amphrysian priestess made reply:
“Not ours, such guile: Fear not! This warrior’s arms
Are innocent. Let Cerberus from his cave
Bay ceaselessly, the bloodless shades to scare;
Let Proserpine immaculately keep
The house and honor of her kinsman King.
Trojan Aeneas, famed for faithful prayer
And victory in arms, descends to seek
His father in this gloomy deep of death.
If loyal goodness move not such as thee,
This branch at least” (she drew it from her breast)
“Thou knowest well.”
Then cooled his wrathful heart;
With silent lips he looked and wondering eyes
Upon that fateful, venerable wand,
Seen only once an age. Shoreward he turned,
And pushed their way his boat of leaden hue. (Vergil. A. 6. 400-417)

Continuing the mirroring, Kesarion does take Maria to Plato first and all of them are facing the guardian of the palace, the Grand Chamberlain Stavrikios, an eunuch whose depiction can act as a parallel to Charon: “dressed in heavy brocade, his pointed nose and keen eyes riveted on that womanly youthfulness”⁷³ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 203); “he bears the imprint of the fox upon his face”⁷⁴ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 255). His rod decides which of the twenty candidates will be granted access to the Palace as future bride-princess. Maria makes herself conspicuous “for she looked like a reflection of the divine splendour of the sunset”⁷⁵ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 203). Advised by Plato, Stavrikios opens the door to the Inferno to the splendid virgin, though she is somehow reluctant: “He struck the mosaic floor with his staff three times and stopped beside her”⁷⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 207). The sign of the cross upon her is not a blessing, but a sentence to death.

The last occurrence of the golden bough in the Latin poem is when Aeneas finally reaches Pluto’s palace and places it on the arch door, a final tribute or rite before stepping into the Elysian Fields:

So spoke Apollo’s aged prophetess.
“Now up and on!” she cried. “Thy task fulfil!

⁷² Original Romanian text: “o încălțare mică de piele roșie, pe fața căreia era cusut cu fir de argint un stârc alb luându-și zborul și învăluindu-și moțul” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 190).

⁷³ Original Romanian text: “în straiul lui greu de brocart ațintindu-și nasul ascuțit și privirile agere înspre acea tinerețe femeiască” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 202).

⁷⁴ Original Romanian text: “are pe obraz pecetea vulpei” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 254).

⁷⁵ Original Romanian text: “văzând asupra ei strălucirea dumnezeiască a asfințitului” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 202).

⁷⁶ Original Romanian text: “Bătu de trei ori cu toiagul în mozaic, oprindu-se lângă ea” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 206).

We must make speed. Behold yon arching doors
Yon walls in furnace of the Cyclops forged!
'T is there we are commanded to lay down
Th' appointed offering." So, side by side,
Swift through the intervening dark they strode,
And, drawing near the portal-arch, made pause.
Aeneas, taking station at the door,
Pure, lustral waters o'er his body threw,
And hung for garland there the Golden Bough.
Now, every rite fulfilled, and tribute due
Paid to the sovereign power of Proserpine,
At last within a land delectable
Their journey lay. (Vergil. A. 6. 628-640)

Requested by Irene (Proserpine), chosen by Plato (Sybil of Cumae), handpicked by Kesarion (Aeneas), accepted by Stavrikios (Charon), Maria fulfils her role to ever last within the confines of the Byzantine Imperial Palace, in what could arguably be looked upon as a twentieth century fabrication of Vergil's *Aeneid*; to a different outcome, though.

No less than five times the author makes it explicit Maria is an offering, a sacrifice turned into a prey, a victim, a martyr. Maria: "Among the lustrous marbles and the cold gold ornaments she felt a stranger removed from her vey self, like an offering in the sad ancient tales"⁷⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 221); her mother: "On the night we first entered the imperial residence this poor child of ours had a premonition that she was to be sacrificed"⁷⁸ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 243); Kesarion to Plato: "the priceless gem you had made over to Byzantium had fallen near a putrefied corpse"⁷⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 255); Kesarion to Stavrikios: "Bishop Plato has given Byzantium a gem of purity through the inspiration of a holy spirit"⁸⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 257); Maria to her husband, the Emperor Constantine VI: "Accept me like a sacrifice and do not reject me"⁸¹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 271). Maria is the life tribute paid to enter the Underworld, something Kesarion acknowledges tardily with remorse: "I was the messenger who brought over a taintless flower and threw her into a polluted vortex"⁸² (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 355).

The golden bough might have worked for Aeneas, securing his trip to the green Elysian Fields, the happiest of all places, where he finally met the phantom of his father which prophesized to him the great line of descendants and their great deeds, virtually a concise history of the future Roman Empire. There is nothing like that in Kesarion's trip to the Inferno, on the contrary, the entire periplus is a monumental failure, which poses an inconvenient posture on the future Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantium could provide to Kesarion's kin.

⁷⁷ Original Romanian text: "Între acele marmuri lucii, între acele aururi reci, se simțea străină și depărtată de sine însăși, ca o jertfă din vechi și întristate povești" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 220).

⁷⁸ Original Romanian text: "Această biată copilă a noastră a avut, din noaptea întâia când am intrat în sălașul împărătesc, o vestire cum că e o jertfă" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 242).

⁷⁹ Original Romanian text: "acel odor de preț pe care l-ai închinat domnia ta Bizanțului a căzut lângă un leș putred" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 254).

⁸⁰ Original Romanian text: "Părintele episcop Platon a dăruit Bizanțului un giuvaer al curăției, prin insuflarea unui duh sfânt" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 256).

⁸¹ Original Romanian text: "Primește ființa mea ca pe o jertfă și nu mă respinge" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 270).

⁸² Original Romanian text: "eu am fost solul care am adus o floare curată și am aruncat-o într-o volbură prihănită" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 354).

The golden bough in Vergil's *Aeneid* is *not* identified with mistletoe, something that is clear both in the original Latin text⁸³ and in Dryden's 1697 English translation⁸⁴, for example. To Sadoveanu, the Romanian 1896 translation by George Coșbuc was available, which makes the difference between the golden bough and the mistletoe clear just as well⁸⁵. Thus, no comparative reading with *The Myth of Balder* is seasonable, despite alluring.

Even if Sadoveanu had knowledge about Frazer's golden bough and / or about Vergil's golden bough it is most likely he did *not* relate essentially to them. Not first and foremost. Throughout the novel, Kesarion Breb, the last Dacian high-priest of Zalmoxis, is most uncommonly, oddly referred to as the Egyptian, even by his own people, after he returns to Dacia. Sadoveanu is making a point out of his defining Egyptian spiritual initiation, in so many various ways, up to the point where Kesarion Breb lives in Byzantium in the Egyptian neighbourhood, in a building complex that reproduces the outlines of his recent distinctive experience:

His Holiness Plato found himself in a rotunda where a faint light trickled from above through a roof of green glass. On the walls there were hieroglyphs and paintings. Some of them he knew as he had learnt them in his time. Above a low door between two slender columns he recognized God's eye set between rays of light within the holy letter named Delta.⁸⁶ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 349)

Back home in Dacia, in September 796, while on his final journey towards the recondite mountain to become the last Zalmoxian Deceneus, not only is he referred to as the Egyptian, but a seemingly ordinary conversation is initiated by the servant Constantin: "As I see, even these cranes we hear up above are returning to their own place in Egypt"⁸⁷ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 391). For a proper decoding of the meaning of the golden bough one has to sail back to Egypt⁸⁸.

Sadoveanu is uttering "the golden bough" a single time in his novel, at the very end of chapter fifteen, when virtually all was said and done. This is in the context when Kesarion's repressed love for Maria can finally be acknowledged, as it had been mastered. "We will part now. And this delusion we call our body will also disintegrate. But what is between us now, having been cleared in fire, is a golden bough which will glow within us outside the confines of time."⁸⁹ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 375). At the very end of the first chapter the unknown narrator,

⁸³ "discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit. / Quale solet silvis brumali frigore viscum / fronde virere nova, quod non sua seminat arbor, / et croceo fetu teretis circumdare truncos, / talis erat species auri frondentis opaca / ilice, sic leni crepitabat brattea vento." (Vergilius, 1900, A. 6. 204-209)

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0055%3Abook%3D6%3Acard%3D183>

⁸⁴ "They wing'd their flight aloft; then, stooping low, / Perch'd on the double tree that bears the golden bough. / Thro' the green leafs the glitt'ring shadows glow; / As, on the sacred oak, the wintry mistletoe," (Virgil, 1909) <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/dryden-the-aeneid-dryden-trans>

⁸⁵ "Și pe doritul copac se lasă deodată-amândouă, / Unde prin crengi cenușii străluce mlădița de aur. / Astfel precum, în păduri, prin gerul iernatic e vâscul / Verde la frunze pe care n-ar vrea să le aibă copacul, / Și cu roșcatul său rod mlădițele zvelte le-ncinge / Tot de-o făptură era, pe stejarul cel plin de-ntunec, / Aurul verde și-n vânt dau frunzele sunet de-aur." (Vergilius, 1980, p. 196, A. 6. 203-209)

⁸⁶ Original Romanian text: "preasfințitul Platon găsi un loc rotund unde curgea o lumină slabă de deasupra, prin acoperișul de sticlă verde. Pe ziduri erau hieroglife și zugrăveli. Unele îi erau cunoscute, din învățăturile aceluia timp. Cunosc, deasupra unei uși scunde, între două colonne subțiri, ochiul lui Dumnezeu, între raze și în litera sfântă numită Deltha." (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 348)

⁸⁷ Original Romanian text: "Precât văd, și cocoarele acelea care s-aud pe sus se întorc în locul lor, la țara Egiptului" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 390).

⁸⁸ A future essay shall deal with a comparative reading between Mihail Sadoveanu's *The Golden Bough* and ancient or pre-historical travels to the Other Side, the Underworld, the World of Darkness, such as those of the Egyptian Ra, the Sumerian Enki, and the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh; boats and navigators are of particular interest.

⁸⁹ Original Romanian text: "Iată, ne vom despărți. Se va desface și amăgirea care se numește trup. Dar ceea ce e între noi acum, lămurit în foc, e o creangă de aur care va luci în sine, în afară de timp" (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 374).

an apprentice of the geologist professor Stamatin, has warned us that the manuscript written by the defunct teacher and destined to his disciple (i. e. *The Golden Bough*) “is essentially a love story”⁹⁰ (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 51), a different kind of love.

Conclusions

Mihail Sadoveanu had been initiated into freemasonry in January 1927 and already in 1929 he was an active member of the thirty-three degree of Supreme Council of 33rd and Last Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Romania; the same year he was also Master Mason of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Romania (MLNR). As of 1930 he started a complicated process of unifying all Masonic Lodges from Romania, being Grand Federal Master of United Romanian Freemasonry between 1934 and 1937. Thus, Mihail Sadoveanu had a tremendous masonry experience and status at the moment when he wrote *The Golden Bough*, published in 1933. Echoes of an initiatory wisdom, esoteric, hermetic, of likely Masonic source are manifested (though not entirely comprehensible, of course) in the first chapter of the book, as a guide mark. There the voice belongs to a narrator character, the teacher, whereas the remainder of the doctrine is being concealed within the pages of the novel.

We cogitate upon Mihail Sadoveanu having had cognizance (or at least private belief/conviction), following a tradition of prestigious intellectuals such as Mihai Eminescu, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Vasile Pârvan, on the Dacian ethnic origin of the Romanian people; and, in *The Golden Bough* he voiced this awareness in an artistic manner, presenting an access pattern, an initiation for the reader, for the well trained, able and eager neophyte. After all, “the very morphology of this myth, of the Golden Age, speculates on the man’s capacity to idealize the past, to imagine the future and to think little of the present.”⁹¹ (Ivancu, 2016, p. 175 - our translation). Mihail Sadoveanu exhibits (or insinuates) by artistic means the historical falsification enforced, in his view, on the origin of the Romanian people. For this he resorts to numerous ways of expressing: the ritual suggestion in the beginning, the detail unveiling the Eastern Roman Empire as a socio-spiritual inferno (metaphysical when all is told), feigned, pretended, hollow, false, unredeeming in its essence. It was certainly so for the initiated Dacian Deceneus Kesarion Breb, *the thirty-third and the last*, whose name should be properly read by now as Mason King. An Empire which, for all that, was successful in imposing the ethnic re-denomination of the people into Vlach as well as a new faith, Christianity, suppressing an ancestral consciousness.

References:

- Eminescu, M. (1978). Ghosts. In *Mihai Eminescu: Poems* (C. M. Popescu, Trans.). Eminescu Publishing House. Retrieved August 3, 2024, from <https://www.gabrielditu.com/eminescu/ghosts.asp>
- Eminescu, M. (1980). Ghosts. In *Mihai Eminescu: Poems* (English versions and introduction by R. MacGregor-Hastie) (pp. 44-85). Cluj-Napoca: Dacia Publishing House.
- Eminescu, M. (1998). Strigoii [Ghosts]. În *Mihai Eminescu: Poezii* [Poems]. București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică.

⁹⁰ Original Romanian text: “e, în definitiv, o poveste de dragoste” (Sadoveanu, 1981, p. 50).

⁹¹ Original Romanian text: “Însăși morfologia acestui mit al Vârstei de Aur mizează pe capacitatea omului de a idealiza trecutul, de a imagina viitorul și de a desconsidera prezentul.” (Ivancu, 2016, p. 175)

- Fărnuș, I. (2023). Sadoveanu – un constructor de punți peste timp, spațiu și... ideologii [Sadoveanu – A builder of bridges across time, space, and... ideologies]. *Meridian critic*, 43(2), 1–8. Retrieved August 3, 2024, from <http://meridiancritic.usv.ro/uploads/MC%202023/43%20-%20MC%2002%20-%202023/II.11.%20Farmus%20Ioan.pdf>
- Frazer, J. G. (1894). *The golden bough: A study in comparative religion* (Vol. 1). New York & London: Macmillan and Co.
- Genesios. (1998). *On the reigns of the emperors* (A. Kaldellis, Trans. & Commentary). *Byzantina Australiensia*, 11. Australian Association for Byzantine Studies. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://www.academia.edu/14504732>
- Genesius, I. (1834). *Corpus scriptorium historiae byzantinae*. Ex recognition Caroli Lachmani. Bonnae: Impensis ed. Weberi. MDCCCXXXIV. Retrieved July 21, 2024, from <https://books.google.ro/books?id=Nnh9yGH8fEQC>
- Genesius, J. (1978). [Reges] Iosephi Genesii regum libri quattuor [Kings. Joseph Genesios' four books of the kings]. *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, 14. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://archive.org/stream/cfhb-11.1-nicetae-choniatae-historia>
- Gherghel, I. (1923). Blachernae? sau Vlaherne! [Blachernae? or Vlaherne!]. *ASSLI*, 30(1), 86-87. retrieved July, 21, 2024, from <https://dspace.bcu-iasi.ro/handle/123456789/68384>
- Gherghel, I. (1920). Câteva considerațiuni la cuprinsul noțiunii cuvântului „Vlach” [A few considerations on the content of the word "Vlach"]. *Convorbiri Literare*, 52(5–6), 3–16. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://dinitrandu.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Cateva-contributii-ls-la-cuprinsul-notiunei-cuvantul-Vlach-I.-Gherghel-17p.pdf>
- Gherghel, I. (1927). Câteva precizări filologice-istorice [A few philological-historical additions]. *ASSLI*, 34(2), 58–60. Retrieved July 21, 2024, from <https://dspace.bcu-iasi.ro/handle/123456789/68244>
- Ivancu, O. (2016). Mit, utopie, modernitate [Myth, Utopia, Modernity]. *Incursiuni în imaginar [Incursions into the imaginary]*, (7), 169-178. DOI:10.29302/InImag.2016.7.9
- Janin, R. (1969). *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin* [The ecclesiastical geography of the Byzantine Empire]. pt. 1: *Le siège de Constantinople et in patriarchat œcuménique* [The Seat of Constantinople and the Ecumenical Patriarchate]. Vol. 3: *Les églises et les monastères* [Churches and monasteries] (2nd ed.). Paris.
- Jura, I. (1933). *Mitul în poezia lui Eminescu* [The myth in Eminescu's poetry]. Paris: Librairie Universitaire J. Gamber.
- Lamberz, E. (2008-2016). *Concilium universale Nicaenum secundum, Concilii Actiones* [Second Nicaean Council, Acts of the Council] (Vols. I-VII). Berlin/New York: Verlag Walter de Gruyter.
- Marcea, P. (1981). Prefață [Preface]. In M. Sadoveanu, *Creanga de aur* [The Golden Bough] (E. Farca, Trans.). Romanian-English bilingual edition. Preface by Pompiliu Marcea. Bucharest: Minerva Publishing House.
- Pintescu, F. (2001). Présences de l'élément viking dans l'espace de la romanité orientale en contexte méditerranéen [The Vikings' presence in Eastern Romance lands in a Mediterranean context].

- Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica*, VIII, 257–272. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <http://saa.uaic.ro/articles/SAA.8.2002.257-272.pdf>
- Paleologu, Al. (1978). *Treptele lumii sau calea către sine a lui Mihail Sadoveanu* [The stages of the world or the Mihail Sadoveanu's path towards himself]. București: Cartea Românească.
- Picioruș, D. O. (2017). De la Strigoii la Luceafărul [From Ghosts to The Morning Star]. *Teologie pentru azi*. Retrieved August 2, 2024, from <https://www.teologiepentruazi.ro/2017/04/18/de-la-strigoii-la-luceafarul-1/>
- Popa-Lisseanu, G. (1941). Continuitatea românilor în Dacia. Dovezi nouă [The continuity of Romanians in Dacia. New arguments]. *Analele Academiei Române: Memoriile secțiunii istorice*, 23(9). Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://bcub.ro/lib2life/Continuitatea%20romanilor%20in%20Dacia_Popa-Lisseanu%20Gheorghe_Bucuresti_1941.pdf
- Sadoveanu, M. (1981). *Creanga de aur* [The Golden Bough] (E. Farca, Trans.). Romanian-English bilingual edition. Bucharest: Minerva Publishing House.
- Vasiliu, F. (2019). *Creanga de aur* [The Golden Bough]. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://www.radioromaniacultural.ro/exclusiv-online/creanga-de-aur-id16903.html>
- Vergil. (1910). *Aeneid* (T. C. Williams, Trans.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Retrieved August 2, 2024, from <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0054>
- Vergilius. (1980). *Eneida* [Aeneid] (G. Coșbuc, Trans.; S. Petecel, Ed.). București: Editura Univers.
- Vergilius Maro, P. (1900). *Aeneid*. Ed. J. B. Greenough. Boston: Ginn & Co., available at <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0055> retrieved on August, 13th, 2024
- Virgil's Aeneid. (1909). (J. Dryden, Trans.). New York: P. F. Collier and Son. Retrieved August 13, 2024, from <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/dryden-the-aeneid-dryden-trans>

Translation Studies

**A EXPRESSÃO DO PODER: MARCAS LINGUÍSTICO-ESTILÍSTICAS
DOS TESTEMUNHOS DA TRADUÇÃO DOS TEXTOS MEDIEVAIS
OCIDENTAIS¹**

**LEXICON OF POWER: LINGUISTIC-STYLISTIC FEATURES OF THE
TESTIMONIES OF THE TRANSLATION OF WESTERN MEDIEVAL
TEXTS**

Simona AILENII²

Universidade Alexandru Ioan Cuza de Iași
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania

e-mail: simona.ailenii@uaic.ro

Abstract

In this study in which we focus on the linguistic-stylistic features of the testimonies of the translation of Western medieval texts, the purpose is to show some lexicon of power, with masculine referent, through which the process of reception of these texts, in different cultures and times, is reflected. In the first moment of our analysis, attention is drawn to the reception of French Arthurian texts in culture with sociocultural affinities, Galician-Portuguese, and in a coeval or very close epoch to that in which the respective texts originate. In the second moment of our analysis, attention is drawn to the reception, in a modern epoch, of several Western medieval texts in an Eastern culture, Romanian, with different features from that which originates the texts.

Keywords: medieval text; translation; linguistic-stylistic marks; lexicon of power.

Creemos ser pertinente, para o percurso proposto, fazer alguns esclarecimentos terminológicos: **1.** textos medievais ocidentais e a sua tradução, **2.** testemunhos da tradução e **3.** marcas linguístico-estilísticas: a expressão do poder.

1. Textos medievais ocidentais e a sua tradução

No que diz respeito aos textos medievais ocidentais, de entre os quais os romances arturianos constituem um corpus signifiante, considera-se que, enquanto o seu universo romanesco francês é amplo, o conjunto dos testemunhos que os transmite é muito mais amplo. Este facto deve-se ao fenómeno de tradução que se manifesta, por exemplo, na Idade Média, em solo português. Na primeira parte da nossa abordagem, ocupamo-nos do domínio galego-português em que se situam os testemunhos conservados da tradução dos textos arturianos franceses. A amplitude do conjunto textual tem a ver, em geral, tanto com o plano da forma, como com o plano do conteúdo. Ou seja, a receção da matéria narrativa dos textos medievais

¹ Article History: Received: 30.12.2024. Accepted: 17.03.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

² Agradeço o precioso auxílio na revisão deste trabalho e as valiosas sugestões da parte de Rafaela Silva e Filipe Moreira.

ocidentais, por um lado, excede as fronteiras linguísticas do domínio original e, por outro, estende-se da lírica à prosa, tomando em consideração apenas dois critérios de referência. São igualmente incluídos textos medievais ocidentais sem serem arturianos, que veremos adiante, cuja relevância reside no facto de explorar os mesmos recursos linguístico-estilísticos no acto de tradução.

Assim sendo, para o primeiro momento da nossa análise, e em relação aos romances arturianos franceses, seleccionámos, do conjunto textual conhecido, alguns textos em prosa do ciclo do Pseudo-Robert de Boron³, conhecidos pelas designações *L'Estoire del Saint Graal* — duas edições⁴ —; *Le Roman de Tristan* — duas edições⁵ e três manuscritos⁶ —; *La Suite du Roman de Merlin* — duas edições⁷ —; e os seus correspondentes galego-portugueses, resultados do acto de tradução, como veremos adiante, e designados, na tradição literária, pelas denominações seguintes: a *Estória do Santo Graal. Livro Português de José de Arimateia* — duas edições⁸ e um manuscrito (Ailenii, 2019, pp. 375-419)⁹ —; o *Livro de Tristan* — uma edição¹⁰ —; e, por último, o *Livro de Merlin* — uma edição¹¹.

Para o segundo momento da nossa análise, na qual trataremos dos vários textos medievais ocidentais em análise, em tradução romena, realizada na contemporaneidade, são, segundo o contexto cultural de origem, românicos e germânicos. Os românicos a que nos referimos são, em ordem cronológica da publicação da sua tradução, *Romanul lui Tristan și Iseut*¹² (*Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut*)¹³; o poema de Chrétien de Troyes, *Cavalerul Lancelot*¹⁴ (*Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la charrette*)¹⁵; *Romanele Mesei rotunde*, em duas traduções¹⁶ (*Les Romans de la Table Ronde*)¹⁷; um segundo poema de Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain – Cavalerul cu Leul*¹⁸ (*Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion*)¹⁹ (Stănescu, 1977, p. 100); *Cîntarea lui Roland* ou *Cîntecul lui Roland*, em três traduções²⁰ (*La Chanson de Roland*)²¹; *Cîntecul Cidului*

³ Para mais detalhes sobre o ciclo do Pseudo-Robert de Boron, ver os estudos de Miranda, 1998; Laranjinha, 2010; Calvário Correia 2015.

⁴ Doravante serão designadas por *So* e *Po*.

⁵ Doravante designadas por *RTa* e *RTb*.

⁶ Ms. fr. 99: Bibliothèque nationale de France (doravante designado por ms. 99 BNF); Ms. fr. 750: Bibliothèque nationale de France (doravante designado por ms. 750 BNF); Ms. fr. 756: Bibliothèque nationale de France (doravante designado por ms. 756 BNF).

⁷ Doravante será designadas por *SMa* e *S Mb*.

⁸ O manuscrito 643 do Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, objecto da edição designada por *TT*, conhece uma outra edição paleográfica, assinada por Carter, 1967. O texto lido na primeira edição citada é usado por nós.

⁹ Trata-se do manuscrito de Santo Tirso, NOT/CNSTS01/001/0012 [*capa*] do Arquivo Distrital do Porto. Doravante será designado por *ST*.

¹⁰ Doravante será designada por *LT*.

¹¹ Doravante será designada por *LM*.

¹² Doravante será usada a designação *Tristan și Iseut*.

¹³ Alexandru Rally traduz a versão adaptada por Joseph Bédier em *Tristan et Iseut*. Ver mais detalhes em *Tristan și Iseut*, 5.

¹⁴ Doravante será usada a designação *Lancelot S*.

¹⁵ Mihai Stănescu indica como base da sua tradução *Cavalerul Lancelot* a edição designada por *Lancelot*. Ver detalhes em Stănescu, 1973, 180.

¹⁶ Há uma tradução integral realizada por A. Tita, designada por *Romane T*, e uma tradução parcial realizada por D. Gradu, designada por *Romane G*.

¹⁷ Tanto a tradução realizada por A. Tita, como a realizada por D. Gradu partem da versão redigida por J. Boulenger e publicada, inicialmente, em 1922-1923 (4 vols.). Esta versão, redigida em francês moderno, parte ela própria da edição *So*, acima citada na nota 1. A versão de J. Boulenger conhece reedições, como a de 1971 (3 vols.), base da tradução de A. Tita. Conform Bădescu, 1976, VII-X. A tradução de D. Gradu baseia-se na edição de 1922-1923. Ver detalhes em Gradu, 2019, 6. A edição utilizada por nós é doravante designada por *Romans*.

¹⁸ Doravante será designado por *Yvain S*.

¹⁹ M. Stănescu indica como base da sua tradução *Yvain – Cavalerul cu Leul* a edição designada por *Yvain*.

²⁰ A primeira tradução, de 1941, assinada por E. Tănase, será designada por *Roland Ta*; a segunda tradução, de 1974, assinada pelo mesmo tradutor, será designada por *Roland Tb*; e a terceira tradução, de 1978, assinada por S. Bercescu e V. Bercescu, será doravante designada por *Roland B*.

²¹ Tanto *Roland Ta*, *Roland Tb*, como *Roland B* indicam como base das suas traduções a edição designada por nós *Roland* (designam duas edições, 1922 e 1931). Mais exactamente, a tradução *Roland Ta* e a *Roland B* partem da edição francesa de

ou *Cîntarea Cidului*, em duas traduções²² (*El Cantar de Mío Cid*²³) (Bercescu, 1978, p. 138); *Tristan Nebun*²⁴ (*La Folie Tristan*²⁵) (Bercescu & Bercescu 1978, p. 99); *Romanul despre Tristan de Béroul*²⁶ (*Le Roman de Tristan*²⁷); *În căutarea Sfîntului Graal*²⁸ (*Demanda do Santo Graal*²⁹) (Ailenii, 2015, p. 15); um terceiro poema de Chrétien de Troyes, *Cavalerul Perceval – Povestea Graalului*³⁰ (*Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*³¹) (Pavel, 2016, p. 16; Poirion, 1994, LV). Os textos germânicos, também em ordem cronológica da sua publicação, são *Cîntecul Nibelungilor*, em duas traduções³² (*Das Nibelungenlied*³³) (Dumitrescu Buşulenga, 1964, p. 7; Paradais, 1971, p. 5); *Beowulf*³⁴ (*Beowulf DL*³⁵) (Duşescu & Leviţchi, 1969, p. 17); e *Parsifal*³⁶ de Wolfram von Eschenbach (*Parzival*³⁷) (Răducanu, 1978, p. 219). Como já se indicou, em relação aos textos originais, baseamos a nossa análise das traduções no texto indicado pelo(s) próprio(s) tradutor(es) como fonte da sua versão em língua romena.

É legítima a interrogação sobre a relevância de um paralelismo entre as traduções portuguesas, realizadas em época medieval, a partir dos textos franceses, por um lado, e, por outro, as traduções romenas, realizadas em época moderna, a partir quer de textos em francês antigo, castelhano, galego-português, inglês antigo e médio e médio-alto-alemão, quer adaptações em registo moderno (casos a partir do francês moderno).

Quanto ao fenómeno da tradução destes textos, e como se mencionou anteriormente, incluímos na nossa análise dois domínios linguísticos em que se conhecem versões destes textos. Ou seja, para os arturianos, o galego-português, e, para os vários medievais ocidentais, o romeno moderno. As línguas recetoras em discussão, pelas próprias denominações, galego-português e romeno moderno, representam dois estados distintos na sua diacronia. O que nos interessa observar é a dinâmica léxico-semântica que as caracteriza e que sobressai através do processo da tradução. A relevância da abordagem das versões traduzidas nestas duas línguas

1922, enquanto a tradução *Roland Tb* parte da edição francesa de 1931. Ver mais detalhes em *Roland Ta*, 112; *Roland B*, 18; *Roland Tb*, 4. A edição utilizada por nós é a de 1922.

²² Doravante serão usadas as designações *Cid B* e *Cid T*.

²³ V. Bercescu indica como base da sua tradução de *Cîntecul Cidului* a edição seguinte: R. Menéndez Pidal, Ed., 1946. Enquanto E. Tănase indica como base da sua tradução a edição bilingue: R. Menéndez Pidal, Ed., 1955. Ver detalhes em *Cid T*, 2. Como a edição de R. Menéndez Pidal conhece reedições, a utilizada por nós é a designado por *Cid*.

²⁴ Doravante será designado por *Tristan Nebun*.

²⁵ S. Bercescu e V. Bercescu indicam como base da sua tradução *Tristan Nebun* a edição de Bédier 1907. O texto francês será doravante designado por *Folie Tristan*.

²⁶ Béroul 2014b, doravante designado por *Béroul D*. Carmen Dinescu oferece uma tradução em verso, bilingue, incluindo, em paralelo, no lado esquerdo de cada página, o texto de Béroul editado por Lacroix, Walter 2010 (sob a designação *Béroul*), e, no lado direito da página, a tradução romena. Cf. Dinescu, 2014, pp. 5-6.

²⁷ O texto francês será doravante designado por *Béroul*.

²⁸ Doravante será designado por *Căutarea*.

²⁹ A base da tradução *Căutarea* é a edição designada *Demanda*.

³⁰ Doravante será designado por *Perceval P*.

³¹ Maria Pavel indica como base da sua tradução *Perceval P* a edição designada *Perceval*. Segundo igualmente menciona a autora, na edição assinada por F. Lecoy lê-se o texto do manuscrito 794 BNF, que representa uma cópia realizada por Guiot de Provins, datada da primeira metade do século XIII. Uma outra edição do mesmo manuscrito encontra-se assinada por D. Poirion, D'Anne Berthelot, P. F. Dembowski, S. Lefèvre, K. D. Uitti, & Ph. Walter. Esta edição utilizada por nós será doravante designada por *Perceval*.

³² Doravante designados por *Nibelungi T* e *Nibelungi P*.

³³ Por um lado, a autora Z. Dumitrescu-Buşulenga indica como edição base da tradução de V. Tempeanu a realizada por K. Bartsch em 1886. Esta edição base será doravante designada por *Nibelungenlied Ba*. Por outro lado, Claudiu Paradais indica como edição base da própria tradução a realizada por J. K. Simrock em 1914/1868, 1898. Este texto base será doravante designado por *Nibelungenlied Si*.

³⁴ Doravante designado por *Beowulf DL*.

³⁵ D. Duşescu e L. Leviţchi indicam quatro versões que representam a base da sua tradução realizadas por Ch. W. Elliot et al. em 1910, R. K. Gordon em 1957, J. R. C. Hall em 1967 [1911] e C. L. Wrenn em 1953 (todas, sob a designação *Beowulf*). Destas quatro versões citadas como base da tradução, a primeira é nomeadamente citada por nós.

³⁶ Doravante será designado por *Parsifal*.

³⁷ S. Răducanu indica como base da sua tradução *Parsifal* a edição de Wolfram von Eschenbach de 1891. O texto alemão será doravante designado por *Parzival*.

românicas reside necessariamente em dois aspetos: as épocas caracterizadas pelos seus paradigmas sociais em que se realizam as traduções nestas línguas, por um lado, e, por outro, a dinâmica dos recursos linguístico-estilísticos que nelas se manifesta. Estes recursos do texto de origem, como veremos, são (re)valorizados, pelas opções de tradução, no texto de destino.

2. Testemunhos da tradução

Quanto aos testemunhos da tradução ibérica dos textos arturianos, tomamos em consideração quatro testemunhos: dois em que lemos a tradução galego-portuguesa da *Estória do Santo Graal. Livro Português de José de Arimateia*, *ST* e *TT*; um terceiro em que lemos a tradução galego-portuguesa do *Livro de Tristan*, *LT*, e um quarto testemunho em que lemos a tradução também galego-portuguesa do *Livro de Merlin*, *LM*.

Sobre os dois testemunhos que transmitem a *Estória do Santo Graal. Livro Português de José de Arimateia* sabe-se, entre outros aspetos, que, por um lado, são datados dos finais do século XIII – inícios do século XIV (Dias, 2003-2006; Ailenii, 2019, pp. 19-28; 45-66.), o primeiro (*ST*), e do século XVI (Miranda, 2016, p. XV.), o segundo (*TT*), e que, por outro lado, se preservam, do ponto de vista da sua materialidade, o primeiro, parcialmente, e o segundo, integralmente. Quanto aos testemunhos que transmitem as traduções intituladas o *Livro de Tristan* (*LT*) e o *Livro de Merlin* (*LM*), admite-se a datação do século XIV (Pichel & Barreiro, 2017, pp. 159-214)³⁸ e conhece-se a forma parcial em que se preservam os dois, dada a escassez material em que se pode ler texto (Ailenii, 2019, pp. 29-36, 67-78). Trata-se, como já se indicou, de testemunhos da tradução galego-portuguesa dos romances arturianos franceses, tradução realizada, segundo os estudiosos portugueses (Miranda, 1998; Laranjinha, 2010; Calvário Correia, 2015), na segunda metade do século XIII a partir de textos franceses redigidos na primeira metade do século XIII (Miranda, 1998, pp. 14; 246).

Por outro lado, no tocante aos testemunhos da tradução de vários textos medievais ocidentais, do lado oriental, o romeno, salientam-se cinco aspetos. Em primeiro lugar, são versões em ordem cronológica da publicação e que aparecem a partir do século XX: *Roland Ta* (1941) (Grigoriu, 2019)³⁹, *Nibelungi T* (1964), *Beowulf DL* (1969), *Tristan și Iseut* (1970), *Nibelungi P* (1971), *Lancelot S* (1973), *Roland Tb* (1974), *Romane T* (1976), *Yvain S* (1977), *Roland B* (1978), *Cid B* (1978), *Tristan Nebun* (1978), *Parsifal* (1978), *Cid T* (1979), *Béroutl D* (2014), *Căutarearea* (2015), *Perceval P* (2016), *Romane G* (2019). Em segundo lugar, são, em ordem alfabética, traduções realizadas com base nas versões originais antigas (*Beowulf DL*, *Béroutl D*, *Cid B*, *Cid T*, *Căutarearea*, *Lancelot S*, *Nibelungi P*, *Nibelungi T*, *Parsifal*, *Perceval P*, *Roland B*, *Roland Ta*, *Roland Tb*, *Tristan Nebun*, *Yvain S*), com três exceções que se realizam a partir das versões em francês moderno (*Tristan și Iseut*, *Romane T* e *Romane G*). Em terceiro lugar, sendo o original antigo em verso, algumas são traduções realizadas igualmente em verso (os casos de *Béroutl D*, *Roland B*, *Roland Tb*, *Tristan Nebun*, *Cid B*, *Cid T*, *Beowulf DL*, *Parsifal*, *Nibelungi T*) ou em prosa ritmada (*Roland Ta*). Em quarto lugar, outras, apesar de o original antigo ser em verso, são traduções em prosa (os casos de *Yvain S*, *Lancelot S*, *Perceval*, *Nibelungi P*). E, por último, com o original antigo em prosa, é realizada uma tradução, ainda parcial, em prosa (*Căutarearea*). Incluímos na nossa comparação, como se mencionou anteriormente, três traduções (*Romane T*, *Romane G* e *Tristan și Iseut*) efetuadas com base nas fontes francesas modernas, por ser considerado relevante o paralelismo devido aos recursos linguístico-estilísticos de teor arcaico que nelas igualmente se verificam.

A análise comparatista entre os testemunhos medievais do espaço ibérico e os seus correspondentes originais do espaço francês parte dos resultados obtidos numa investigação

³⁸ R. Pichel e X. Varela Barreiro mostram, num excelente estudo, a relevância de situar a cópia do manuscrito conservado na primeira metade do século XIV.

³⁹ Aspetos estilísticos da tradução de 1941 são objeto de estudo consistente de B. Grigoriu.

anteriormente realizada (Ailenii, 2019). Da corroboração de algumas conclusões desta investigação e do estudo das traduções romenas de vários textos medievais ocidentais, quer em verso, quer em prosa, resulta o ponto de partida para a reflexão sobre o fenómeno da tradução que põe em relevo os recursos linguístico-estilísticos das línguas-alvo. Referimo-nos ao vocabulário que exprime o poder com referente masculino, mais exatamente, os títulos da nobreza, das hierarquias, da reverência social e familiar, da condição civil. A escolha baseia-se no facto de este campo semântico conhecer uma marca sociocultural peculiar, que encontra várias opções de tradução. Estas opções refletem a organização sociocultural do mundo medieval ocidental, um mundo distinto deste ponto de vista do mundo oriental. A nível linguístico, o exame atento da tradução deste vocabulário mostra como se pendulam entre as técnicas da correspondência total, sendo favorável a raiz latina das línguas românicas dos textos em diálogo, ou da equivalência semântico-estilística, sendo favorável a possibilidade de construir conotação com várias marcas estilísticas que evidenciam, no fundo, a tendência para recuperar ou transmitir, como refere também Maria Pavel (Pavel, 2016, pp. 17-18), o discurso medieval do texto fonte. Neste sentido, a importação dos lexemas com a carga semântica da nobreza, do alto tratamento social, familiar, específicas da língua fonte, é uma técnica adotada pelos tradutores.

Assim, observar-se-á que traduzir em época moderna um texto arcaico representa, historicamente, linguisticamente, estilisticamente, um ato que (pre)ssupõe superar dificuldades de teor concetual e lexical distintas das da tradução realizada em época coeva ou próxima da sua génese. São, naturalmente, particularidades definitórias relacionadas com o extenso assincronismo entre a produção desta literatura e as suas versões traduzidas em época moderna. Por outro lado, o exame atento das soluções de tradução a nível lexical, por exemplo, permite observar a tendência visível no texto-alvo para minimizar este assincronismo. Assim sendo, estas opções de tradução baseadas na linguagem popular, arcaica podem potenciar a receção da narrativa do texto medieval. Referimo-nos às opções de tradução que põem em relevo os recursos linguísticos fonéticos, lexicais e morfossintáticos com carácter arcaico, enquanto marca estilística do texto. Na nossa exposição, centraremos a atenção em alguns casos lexicais, mais concretamente no vocabulário relacionado com o poder e com a autoridade social, familiar, sendo o campo semântico cuja carga estilística é reveladora no sentido de refletir as particularidades da organização sociocultural do mundo medieval ocidental.

É importante sublinhar o facto de que se trata da linguagem analisada que reflete o paradigma social do mundo medieval. Em relação ao uso desta linguagem, à luz da história da sociedade e, implicitamente, da linguagem, algumas formas analisadas evidenciam-se, naturalmente, por valências semânticas muito diminutas face ao seu uso pré-moderno. Referimo-nos, por exemplo, à forma ro. *domn* (pt. *senhor*) e/ou os seus equivalentes noutras línguas, que, no uso atual, representam somente fórmulas de respeito social bastante atenuado semanticamente. No texto, estas formas comportam valências semânticas arcaicas reforçadas pela narrativa.

Considerar-se que a tradução *per se*, particularizada neste caso na tradução galego-portuguesa dos textos franceses em confronto com a romena, realizada na contemporaneidade, dos mesmos textos, tem um impacto significativo de vários pontos de vista. No nosso caso, interessa o impacto a nível linguístico-estilístico concretizado pelo fenómeno de empréstimo. Assim, trata-se da dimensão na qual, implicitamente, se reflete a maneira de outrem ver o mundo, uma maneira que se pode sobrepor ou diferenciar da sua, e que, naturalmente, pode ou não ser adotada. As distâncias, as proximidades, as nuances do impacto tido no domínio cultural e linguístico ibérico e medieval, e o impacto tido no domínio romeno e moderno, no qual se realizam versões traduzidas de textos medievais é o tema sobre o qual nos debruçamos ao longo do exame dos factos.

3. Marcas linguístico-estilísticas: a expressão do poder

Passando à análise dos elementos lexicais e das suas marcas estilísticas, quanto à tradução galego-portuguesa dos textos franceses, realizada, obviamente, a grande distância da tradução moderna no espaço romeno dos mesmos textos, considera-se que, no domínio ibérico, o fenómeno teve um impacto significativo de vários pontos de vista. Esse impacto significativo manifestou-se a nível cultural, social e linguístico, no sentido da formação da linguagem literária. Foi também considerado um acto de emulação que formou cada cultura nova e possibilitou o exercício da sua língua literária.

No que diz respeito ao fenómeno da tradução dos textos arcaicos realizada em época moderna, os resultados revelam, à primeira vista, dois aspetos importantes: por um lado, tratando-se de uma língua já formada, cultivada, evidencia-se o tesouro imprescindível da sua linguagem arcaica e popular à disposição do tradutor que pode facilitar a receção do mundo arcaico, e por outro, a fonte continua, apesar de ser arcaica, a fornecer elementos lexicais novos através dos quais se realiza também a marca cultural e literária do mundo antigo. A primeira situação é exemplificada pelos elementos arcaicos autóctones portugueses e a segunda pelos elementos intitulados eruditos, com valor estilístico pseudo-arcaico.

3.1 Caso galego-português *versus* francês

Chama-se também a atenção para o facto de que, no caso ibérico, é possível comparar uma única tradução com várias redações francesas, enquanto no caso romeno a variação das traduções é mais generosa, havendo casos de dupla ou tripla tradução, mas o original é único, como se viu anteriormente. Os vestígios materiais das traduções do espaço peninsular ibérico são precários, facto causado naturalmente pelas vicissitudes da história.

3.1.1 Gran peça, en aquela camara

Exemplos do contexto ibérico, lidos nos textos traduzidos *LT*, *LM*, ilustram o fenómeno da tradução de lexemas com carga semântica denotativa relacionada à descrição, quer do momento combativo, quer do lugar comemorativo dos heróis de cada narrativa. Os contextos *gran peça* (1.a) (Ailenii, 2019 p. 354), do primeiro exemplo, ou *en aquela camara* (2.a) (Ailenii, 2019, p. 359), do segundo exemplo, registados nos testemunhos *LT* e *LM*, ilustram um mimetismo lexical em relação aos contextos originais *grant piece* (1b, c, d, e, f), e *en la chambre mesme* (2b, c) respetivamente, lidos nos textos franceses correspondentes. No primeiro caso, põe-se em relevo a similaridade total entre a estrutura lexical galego-portuguesa e a francesa. Nota-se o significado do nome *piece* ‘un certain espace de temps’⁴⁰, valorizado semanticamente pelo decalque em português. A expressão portuguesa regista um uso frequente na lírica medieval ou noutros textos da época⁴¹. No segundo caso, a similaridade consta, além do uso do determinativo deíctico nominal, da proximidade da raiz das formas *chambre*⁴², respetivamente *camara*⁴³. Com este significado do texto, esta última é um arcaísmo em português moderno⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ Em *LG* registam-se várias hipóteses arcaicas em que o nome é ocorrente com o sentido temporal (*grant piece* ‘après un long temps, ‘heure avancée’; *par grant piece* ‘pendant longtemps’; *bonne piece* ‘longtemps’; *certaine piece* ‘certain temps’; *a chief de piece* ‘enfin’ etc.). Ver *piece* em *LG*.

⁴¹ Em *DDGM* registam-se ocorrências da expressão *gram peça* com o sentido ‘há muito tempo’ ou ‘grande pedaço’. Ver *peça* em *DDGM*. Estas expressões representam arcaísmos tanto em francês, como em português atuais.

⁴² Em *CNRTL* regista-se o étimo lat. class. *camera*. Ver *chambre* em *CNRTL*.

⁴³ Em *DLP* regista-se o étimo lat. *camāra*. Ver *câmara* em *DLP*.

⁴⁴ Em *DLP* descreve-se o lema como desusado com o significado ‘compartimento de uma casa, especialmente do quarto de dormir’. Ver *câmara* em *DLP*. O equivalente actual, com o respectivo significado, é *quarto*.

- (1) a. «*Gran peça* durou a batalla em esta guisa que nengũu non no podia saber» (*LT*, p. 82/l.₁₅₄₋₁₅₅)
b. «*Grant pieche* dure la bataille en tel maniere que nus ne les veïst adont ki peüst mie legierement connoistre» (*RTa*, §30/l.₁₋₂)
c. «*Grant piece* dure la bataille en tel maniere que nus ne les veïst adonc qui poïst mie legierement conoistre» (*RTb*, §734/l.₁₋₂)
d. «*Grant piece* dure la bataille en tel maniere que nuls ne le veïst adonc qui poïst mie connoistre legierement» (ms. 750 BNF, f. 135^v/col._{II})
e. «*Grant piece* dura la bataille en tele maniere que nus ne les veïst a donc qui peust legierement conoistre» (ms. 756 BNF, f. 157^v/col._{II})
f. «*Grant piece* dura la bataille en telle maniere que nul ne lez veïst adont qui peust legierement conoistre» (ms. 99 BNF, f. 149^v/col._{II})
(2) a. «E fforon soterrados desũu *en aquela camara*» (*LM*, p. 152/l.₂₆₋₂₇)
b. «e furent enterré ensemble *en la chaumbre mesme*» (*SMA*, pp. 179-180)
c. «et furent mis en terre ensamble *en la chambre meesmes*» (*SMb*, §381/l.₂₆₋₂₇)

3.1.2 Senhor

Quanto à tradução do vocabulário relacionado com o poder e com a autoridade identificada, tanto em contexto ibérico, como em contexto romeno, é importante observar algumas tendências. No nosso trabalho já citado, assinalamos, nas traduções ibéricas, para o referente masculino, o emprego dos vocábulos *don*, *senhor* enquanto equivalentes dos franceses *monseigneur*, *sire*, *seigneur*, *dant* (Ailenii, 2019, 327-338). No caso (3b), a forma apelativa autóctone portuguesa *senhor*⁴⁵, lida apenas em *TT*, parece equivaler, no mesmo contexto estilístico, à forma *sire*⁴⁶, registada nos dois testemunhos franceses colacionados (3c, d).

- (3) a. «[...]» (*ST*, p. 380, f. 2^r/col._{II})
b. «El rei dise que era bom nome. “*Senhor*”, dise el rei» (*TT*, p. 121/f. 93^r)
c. «Et li rois li dist quil auoit moult haut non. Puis li dist: *Sire*» (*So*, p. 93/l.₃₅₋₃₆)
d. «Et li rois respondi ke mout avoit haut non et haut mestier et si dist: *Sire*» (*Po*, §321/l.₃₋₄)

3.1.3 Dom

Nos excertos (4) e (5), a forma reverencial de tratamento *dom*⁴⁷, dos sintagmas *dom Lançarote do Lago* (4a) e *dom Tristan* (5a), oferece uma variante autóctone do correspondente francês *monseigneur*⁴⁸ *Lancelot dou Lac* (4d), respetivamente *monseignor Tristan* (5b, c), apesar de se registar, nas outras redações francesas colacionadas, somente o nome próprio do cavaleiro (*Lancelot de Lac* ou *Lancelot*, 4b, c, e, f; *Tristan*, 5d, e, f). Em romeno, como teremos oportunidade de observar *infra*, esta forma de respeito é valorizada por adaptação fonética (*monsénior*⁴⁹), devido à sua tradição literária e sociocultural particular.

- (4) a. «E coñocedes vos disseron eles *dom Lançarote do Lago*» (*LT*, p. 76/l.₅₆₋₅₇)
b. «– Et *Lanselot du Lac*, font il, connessiés vous?» (*RTa*, vol. I, §3/l.₆₋₇)

⁴⁵ *DLP* regista o étimo lat. *senior*, -ōris. Ver *senhor* em *DLP*. Ou em *DELP* lê-se: ‘lat. *seniore*, “mais velho”, que na baixa latinidade se tornou um termo de respeito, equivalente a *dominus*.’

⁴⁶ *CNRTL* indica provir do ‘lat. pop. **seior*, utilisée comme adresse, forma contractée peut-être sous l’infl. de *maior* [...] du class. *senior*’. Ver *sire* em *CNRTL*.

⁴⁷ *DELP* regista ter origem ‘do lat. *dominu*, “senhor”, numa forma sincopada *domnu*, apocopada pela próclise diante de nome próprio.’ Ou *DLP* explica, em primeiro lugar, que é uma forma desusada, concorrida pela forma actual *senhor*, e em segundo lugar, trata-se de ‘uma forma reverenciosa de tratamento que precede o nome próprio de membros da família real (reis, príncipes, infantes), da antiga nobreza e de alguns membros do clero’. Ver *dom* em *DLP*.

⁴⁸ *CNRTL* indica os componentes: ‘l’adj. poss. *mon** e o nome *seigneur**’. Ver *monseigneur* em *CNRTL*.

⁴⁹ Ver *monsénior* em *DA/DLR*.

- c. «Et *Lancelot dou Lac*, font il, connoissiez vos?» (*RTb*, §712/l.6)
- d. «Et *monseignor Lancelot dou Lac*, font il, connoissiez le vos?» (ms. 750 BNF, f. 129^v/col.1)
- e. «et *Lancelot de Lac*, font il, conoissies vous?» (ms. 756 BNF, f. 151^v/col.1)
- f. «et cognoissez voz *Lancelot*» (ms. 99 BNF, f. 144^v/col.11)
- (5) a. «Todo aquel dia pensara Lançarote en *dom Tristan*, que non pensou en al» (*LT*, p. 74/l.20-21)
- b. «Tot celui jor pensa tant a *monseignor Tristan* qu'il ne pensa mie granment a autre chose» (ms. 750 BNF, f. 128^v/col.11 — f. 128^v/col.1)
- c. «Tout celui jour pensa tant Lanselos a *monsigneur Tristran* k'il ne pensa mie granment a autre cose» (*RTa*, vol. I, §1/l.9-10)
- d. «Tot celi jor pensa tant a *Tristan* qu'il ne pensa mie granment a autre chose» (*RTb*, §710/l.7-8)
- e. «Tot celui jor pensa tant a *Tristan* qu'il ne pensa granment a autre chose» (ms. 756 BNF, f. 151^r/col.1 — f. 151^r/col.11)
- f. «Tout celui jour pensa tant a *Tristan* qu'il ne pensa mie granment a autre chose» (ms. 99 BNF, f. 144^v/col.1)

3.2 O caso romeno *versus* línguas românicas ocidentais e germânicas

Do lado romeno, as soluções de tradução dos mesmos vocábulos ou de outros do mesmo campo semântico, permitem-nos observar duas tendências. Em primeiro lugar, assinala-se a tendência para marcar e/ou manter o carácter arcaico da língua de origem através das formas arcaicas autóctones e, em segundo lugar, salienta-se a tendência para usar equivalentes pseudo-arcaicos, para o mesmo efeito estilístico. Os termos considerados autóctones representam, de facto, quer o elemento latino (*domn*, *împărat*), quer o elemento de superstrato eslavo arcaico, quer o elemento de adstrato oriental ou ocidental, ou seja, são recursos linguístico-estilísticos que refletem como, na língua romena, se tem dado a fusão de várias culturas orientais, como a eslava (*boier*, *crai*), a turca (*emir*), a grega (*monarh*) etc., em tempos pré-modernos, ou a francesa, dado o contexto histórico no qual se (con)viveu durante séculos em solo romeno ou dado o impacto livresco/cultural mútuo entre a cultura romena e a francesa em tempos modernos (*conte*, *pair*). É pertinente, neste sentido, observar, além do uso, da distribuição, da frequência, igualmente a etimologia dos termos em discussão, como vimos no caso do galego-português em confronto com o francês. Entende-se pelos elementos pseudo-arcaicos as formas cujo corpo fonético estrangeiro fica *ad litteram* e é-lhes atribuídas marcas morfológicas autóctones, a determinação definida enclítica em genitivo *-lui* (*Cidului*), a determinação indefinida proclítica *un* (*un amurafle*).

Na primeira classe de arcaísmos léxico-semânticos, os considerados de extração autóctone, ou seja, os que refletem uma experiência sociocultural autóctone ou um contacto com a experiência sociocultural ocidental, integram-se, por ordem alfabética, *baron*, *boier*, *conte*, *crai*, *domn*, *domnitor*, *domnia voastră*, *domnia-ta*, *duce*, *emir*, *împărat*, *măria-ta*, *măria-voastră*, *monarh*, *pair*, *rege*, *rigă*, *seneşal*, *stăpîn*, *suzeran*, *voievod*.

A etimologia⁵⁰ dos termos empregados nas traduções romenas para representar o vocabulário do poder revela múltiplas origens. Em primeiro lugar, sublinhamos as formas latinas⁵¹, duplicadas, em alguns casos por uma etimologia românica (italiano e/ou francês): *domn* (< lat. *dominus*), *duce* (< lat. *dux*, *-cis*, it. *duce*, fr. *duc*), *împărat* (< lat. *imperator*), *rege* (< lat. *rex*, *-gis*). Os casos derivados, no solo romeno, a partir das formas latinas, são *domnitor* (< vb. *domni* + suf. *-tor*), *domnia voastră* (< ro. *domnia* + *voastră*; ro. *domnia*, sendo uma forma com artigo definido enclítico *-a*, provindo de ro. *domn* + suf. *-ie*; ro. *voastră* < lat. pop. *voster*, *vostra*, *-um* = lat. cl. *vester*), *domnia-ta* (< ro. *domnia* + *ta*; ro. *ta* < lat. *tuus*, *tua*), *măria-ta* (< ro. *măria-ta*; ro. *măria* < ro. *mări* + suf. *-ie*; ro. *mări* < ro. *mare* < lat. *mas*, *maris*), *măria-voastră* (< ro. *măria* + *voastră*).

⁵⁰ Todas as etimologias indicadas são com base nos dicionários *DA/DLR*, *DELR*, *Scriban*.

⁵¹ Observa-se que alguns etimologistas indicam a forma de acusativo, enquanto outros, as formas de nominativo e genitivo da declinação latina do étimo.

Em segundo lugar, dependendo dos casos, existe uma etimologia múltipla, tanto não-latina, como neolatina. Trata-se das formas que se devem ao fenómeno de superstrato e adstrato, que sinonimizam ou amplificam o vocabulário autóctone/latino. As formas de origem eslava são *boier* (< bg. *bol'ár(in)*ъ, com as variantes gráficas *bolīarinŭ*, *bolīarin*), *crai* (< sl. *kral'ŭ*, com as grafias *kralŭ*, *kralj*), *stăpîn* (< vsl., bg. *stopanŭ*), *voievod* (< sl. *vojevoda*). A forma neogrega: *rigă* (< ngr. *rígas*). A forma com etimologia múltipla, turca e francesa: *emir* (< tc. *emir*, fr. *émir*); grega, alemã, italiana e francesa: *monarh* (< vgr. *mónarhos*; ngr. *monarhos*, germ. *Monarch*, it. *monarca* e fr. *monarque*); *baron* < germ. *Baron*, fr. *baron*). As formas de origem românica são *conte* (< fr. *conte*, *comte*; it. *conte*), *pair* (< fr. *pair*), *seneşal* (< fr. *senechal*, mlat. *siniscalcus*), *suzeran* (< fr. *suzerain*).

Da segunda classe, os cultismos com o valor estilístico pseudo-arcaico considerados de origem ocidental, fazem parte, por ordem alfabética e definidos na função linguístico-estilística pelos textos de origem, as formas *almasur*, *amuraşle* (*Roland*), *Cid*, *campeador*, *Cid Campeador*, *Mío Cid*, *Mío Cid Campeador* (*Cid*), *don* (*Cid*, *Demanda*), *graf* (*Nibelungenlied Ba*, *Parzival*), *infançon* (*Cid*), *infante* (*Cid*), *marcgraf* (*Nibelungenlied Si*), *messire*, *monsenior*⁵² (*Perceval*, *Yvain*, *Romans*), *senior*⁵³ (*Yvain*, *Romans*, *Perceval*, *Roland*, *Bérout*, *Cid*), *sire* (*Roland*, *Folie Tristan*, *Yvain*, *Demanda*, *Cid*). Quanto a estes elementos livrescos/cultos, alguns encontram atestações na literatura beletrística romena a partir do século XIX⁵⁴ (*don*, *graf*, *infante*, *marcgraf*, *monsenior*, *senior*, *sire*), enquanto os outros não conhecem registos anteriores aos das traduções estudadas (*almasur*, *almuraşle*, *campeador*, *Cid*, *infançon*, *messire*), dado que nenhum dicionário oferece atestações.

O uso do elemento de origem neolatina ou germânica relaciona-se, então, com a língua de origem do texto traduzido e, a nível livresco/culto, tratar-se-ão de novos vocábulos com base nestas opções de tradução. As opções *per se* podem estar sujeitas a vários fatores, como por exemplo, a atitude do tradutor face ao texto, orientado para a língua de destino ou para a língua de origem; a cultura ocidental de onde provém o texto, a neolatina para os termos *almuraşle*, *campeador*, *don*, *messire*, a germânica para as formas *graf*, *marcgraf*. Trata-se de arcaísmos originais na língua de partida que tomam uma imagem pseudo-arcaizante na língua de chegada.

Os casos expostos vêm ilustrar estes fenómenos. Para pôr em relevo a tendência de arcaizar a língua do texto de destino através de elementos autóctones utilizamos os seguintes exemplos: os vocábulos serão analisados por ordem alfabética e apenas alguns dos *supra* mencionados (*boier*, *crai*, *împărat*, *monarh*, *pair*, *rege*, *rigă*, *suzeran*, *voievod*).

3.2.1 Boier

O termo *boier*, -i (1a; 2a), que se encontra somente em *Tristan şi Iseut*, equivalente das formas *seigneurs* (1b) e *sire* (2b) de *Tristan et Iseut*, confere ao texto uma dimensão histórico-social peculiar. Trata-se do título *boier*, usado na época medieval no território romeno, que designa uma pessoa da aristocracia feudal com certos privilégios, por ser um grande

⁵² O termo *monsenior* comporta, na língua romena, tanto a conotação do título honorífico religioso, como a do título de nobreza. No nosso caso em análise trata-se, evidentemente, do segundo significado. Cf. *DA/DLR*.

⁵³ O termo *senior* comporta, na língua romena, tanto o significado da reverência social, como o do título de nobreza. No nosso caso em análise trata-se, evidentemente, do segundo significado. Cf. *DA/DLR*.

⁵⁴ *DA/DLR* inventaria excertos da literatura romena em que há registos dos termos em análise. A título de exemplo, segundo regista *DA/DLR*, a forma *don* encontra-se na obra do poeta nacional romeno Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889): «A.—De ce pângi, o, Dona Diana,/De ce ochiu-ţi lăcrimează?/Nu eşti sântă şi frumoasă/Ca o dramă spaniolă?/Ştii: don Miguel, perfidul,/Inconstant iubeşte-o altă/Alta brună, dulce, pală» (*Romancero español*). («Ó, Dona Diana, porque choras./Porque lacrimam os teus olhos?/Não és tu santa e bela/Como uma drama espanhola?/Don Miguel, pérfido, sabes,/Inconstante outra ama/Outra morena, doce, pálida») (trad.n.). É evidente o facto de que o uso do termo é motivado pelo (con)texto histórico-social ibérico tratado.

proprietário de terras, mas sem estar necessariamente ligado a um título de nobreza, segundo descreve *DA/DLR*⁵⁵.

(1) a. «— Boieri dumneavoastră, plăcu-vă să auziți o poveste frumoasă de dragoste și de moarte?» (*Tristan și Iseut*, p. 15)

b. «— *Seigneurs*, vous plaît-il d'entendre un beau conte d'amour et de mort?» (*Tristan et Iseut*, p. 21)

(2) a. «— Boier Tristan, ce vrei adică să zici?» (*Tristan și Iseut*, p. 53)

b. «— *Sire Tristan*, que voulez-vous dire?» (*Tristan et Iseut*, p. 105)

3.2.2 Crai

O termo *crai* (3a; 4a; 5a; 6a; 7a) é preferido pelas traduções dos textos germânicos, *Beowulf* e *Nibelungenlied* (*Ba* e *Si*), em que corresponde às formas *master-lord* (3b), *der künig* (4b; 5b)/*die könige* (7b) e *die herren* (6b), mostrando uma equivalência semântica. O semantema remete para uma dimensão histórico-literária oral/tradicional, sendo hoje um termo que designa a personagem mais alta da estrutura hierárquica ocorrida na literatura oral e na literatura culta, a última sendo a literatura que imita a linguagem oral ou tem uma estilística arcaizante⁵⁶.

(3) a. «...Port numele Beowulf./Voiesc a duce la fiul lui Healfdene./*craiul* vestit și prințului tău./crăinicia ce port, de se-ndură a da, bun cum îl știu, ascultare urărilor bune.» (*Beowulf DL*, V, pp. 32-33)

b. «“...I am Beowulf named./I am seeking to say to the son of Healfdene/this mission of mine, to thy *master-lord*,/the doughty prince, if he deign at all/grace that we greet him, the good one, now.”» (*Beowulf*, V, p. 15)

(4) a. «Cum o peștește *craiul* Atila pe Kriemhilda» (*Nibelungi T*, Rapsodia a XX-a, p. 259)

b. «Wie *künig* Etzel ze Burgonden nâch Kriemhilde sande» (*Nibelungenlied Ba*, XX. Âventiure, 197)⁵⁷

(5) a. «Întru acel timp Helche, crăiasa, a murit/Și bunul *crai* Atila soție a rîvnit./Îl sfătuiră sfetnicii-o văduvă să ia/Dintru burgunda țară, și văduva Kriemhilda chiar era.» (*Nibelungi T*, 1143, p. 261)

b. «Daz was in einen zîten • dô vrou Helche erstarp,/unt daz *der künig* Etzel • umb' ein ânder vrouwen warp:/dô rieten sîne vriunde • in Burgonden lant/z'einer stolzen witewen, • diu was vrou Kriemhilt genant.» (*Nibelungenlied Ba*, 1143, p. 197)

(6) a. «Cum pornesc *craii* burgunzi spre țara hunilor» (*Nibelungi T*, Rapsodia a XXV-a, p. 333)

b. «Wie *die herren* alle zen hiunen fuoren» (*Nibelungenlied Ba*, XXV. Âventiure, p. 256)

(7) a. «*Craii* burgunzi purced către huni» (*Nibelungi P*, A nouăsprezecea Întîmplare, p. 129)

b. «Wie *die könige* zu den heunen fuhren» (*Nibelungenlied Si*, Fünfundzwanzigstes Ubenteuer, p. 228)

3.2.3 Emir

Em relação à forma *emir*, ver *infra* a análise dos casos pseudo-arcaicos *almasur* e *amurafle*.

⁵⁵ Ver *boier* em *DA/DLR*.

⁵⁶ Ver *craiu* em *DA/DLR*.

⁵⁷ Agradeço o precioso auxílio da parte de Cristina Spinei, Mara Bauer, Iolanda Șoacă na verificação da correspondência dos exemplos selecionados dos textos germânicos.

3.2.4 Împărat

A forma definită enclitică *împăratul* (8a, b, c; 9a, b, c; 10a, b, c), eschilhidă pelos tradutores do texto *Roland*, evidenciă também a correspondência semântică total entre a língua de destino e a de partida e transmite o valor estilístico similar na designação do grau da hierarquia aristocrată da narrativa.

(8) a. «Sire'mpărat — zise Jofrei de'Anju — durerea asta mare n'ô purta atât; ci poruncește să îi caute pe-ai noștri, pe care i-au ucis ai Spaniei în luptă» (*Roland Ta*, CCXI, p. 75)

b. «Sire-mpărat, îi zice Gefrei d'Anjou, supus,/De-astă durere mare nu te lăsa răpus!/CI pune ca pe-ai noștri, ce zac morți pe cîmpie,/Uciși de sarazini în marea bătălie,/Să-i strîngă și-ntr-o groapă să-i pună împreună» (*Roland Tb*, CCXI, 2945-2949, pp. 247-249)

c. «“Sire emperere”, ço dist Gefrei d'Anjou, “Ceste dolor ne demenez tant fort!/Par tut le camp faites querre lez noz/Que cil d'Espagne en la bataille unt mort...”» (*Roland*, CCXI, 2945-2948, pp. 223-224)

(9) a. «împăratul călărește foarte mîndru. “Seniori baroni, – zice'mpăratul Carol –, priviți-mi porțile, și trecătorile înguste...”» (*Roland Ta*, LVIII, p. 21)

b. «Călare împăratul mîndru păsește foarte./“Seniori baroni, el zice, priviți colo departe,/Sînt ale Spaniei porți, cu-ngusta-i trecătoare...”» (*Roland Tb*, LVIII, 739-741, p. 73)

c. «Merge-mpăratul mîndru, e călare./“Seniori baroni, zise Carol cel Mare,/Priviți spre porți, spre strîmta trecătoare...”» (*Roland B*, LVIII, p. 37)

d. «Li empereres mult fierement chevalchet./“Seignurs barons,” dist li emperere Carles,/“Veez les porz et les destreiz passages!...”» (*Roland*, LVIII, 739-741, p. 58)

(10) a. «Cînd vede dar Roland bătaia că va fi, se face mai sălbatec, ca leu-ori leopardul. Iel strigă pe Francezi, cheamă pe-Olivier: “Sire tovarășe și prietene, ceia să n'ô mai spui. Cînd împăratul ne-a lăsat pe-ăști douăzeci de mii, ni i-a ales deoparte: precaut știut-a iel, fricos aci nu-i unul.”» (*Roland Ta*, LXXXVIII, p. 31)

b. «Vede Roland că luptă cumplită se va da;/Ca leul și ca tigru se face mai turbat./Pe franci, pe Olivier, aproape i-a chemat:/“Sire și scump prieten, vorbe mari să lăsăm,/Cu francii ce-mpăratul ni i-a lăsat să stăm./El douăzeci de mii ne-a dat, oameni vîrtoși,/Pe cît știut-a Carol, nu-s între ei fricoși...”» (*Roland Tb*, LXXXVIII, 1110-1116, p. 101)

c. «Și cînd Roland văzu că va fi greu/Simți fiori de leopard și leu./Spre francii săi, spre Olivier rosti:/“Seniore prieten, taci, nu mai vorbi!/Căci împăratul ne-a lăsat aici/Doar franci aleși la douăzeci de mii...”» (*Roland B*, LXXXVIII, p. 48)

d. «Quant Rollant veit que la bataille serat,/Plus se fait fiers que leon ne leupart./Franceis escriet, Olivier apelat:/“Sire cumpainz, amis, nel dire ja!/Li emperere, ki Franceis nos laisat,/Itels .XX. milie en mist a une part...”» (*Roland*, LXXXVIII, 1110-1115, p. 86)

3.2.5 Monarh

Monarhul (11a; 12a) é o nome definită enclítico preferido pelas traduções dos textos germânicos *Parzival* e *Beowulf*. No primeiro texto, *Parzival*, identifica-se o correspondente original *den künec* (11b). No segundo texto, *Beowulf*, pela tradução paradigmática *Mărite monarh* (12a) valoriza-se, em primeiro lugar, o determinativo arcaico da reverência na expressão da função apelativa, equivalendo o superlativo *dearest* (12b), e, em segundo lugar, substitui-se o antropónimo do herói, *Beowulf*, pelo seu título de nobreza, *monarh*.

(11) a. «În mîndrul Spaniei ținut/Era monarhul cunoscut» (*Parsifal*, Cartea a II-a, p. 226)

b. «Dâ ze Spâne im lande/er den künec erkande.» (*Parzival*, Buch II, 58, 27-28)

- (12) a. «vorbind în cuvinte nu multe: “*Mărite monarh./săvîrşeşte pe toate cu spor, cum spuneai tu de tînăr./ca slava-ţi cît este suflare în tine, să nu asfinţească;...*”» (*Beowulf DL*, XXXVI, p. 122)
- b. «and brief words spake: — “*Beowulf dearest, do all bravely,/as in youthful days of yore thou vowedst/that while life should last thou wouldst let no wise/thy glory droop!...*”» (*Beowulf*, XXXVI, p. 78)

3.2.6 Pair

Na hierarquia feudal de França, o título de nobreza dos grandes vassallos do rei encontra-se marcado pelo vocábulo, no plural, *pers*⁵⁸ (13d, 14c, 15c). O uso deste título está ligado à história dos doze pares da corte do rei Carlos Magno que vão acompanhar Roland na batalha contra os sarracenos, contexto em que o termo comporta a conotação, já histórica, de nobreza (Grigoriu, 2019, 34)⁵⁹. O equivalente romeno é realizado por um mimetismo fonético nas formas *peri*⁶⁰ (13a, 14a, 15a) ou *pairi* (13b, 13c, 14b). Além do uso do vocábulo com o significado do título de nobreza nas duas das situações ilustradas (14 e 15), evidencia-se a divisão sociocultural dos actantes no combate: *Des .XII. pers e de la franceise gent* (14c) ou *ses humes et ses pers* (15c). Em relação ao contexto *Des .XII. pers e de la franceise gent* (14c), a perspectiva mantém-se nas traduções propostas em 14a (*de doisprezece peri, şi de Francezii*) e em 14b (*Pe pairii săi iubiţi şi pe francezi*), apesar de a versão 14b registar um adjectivo afectivo (*iubiţi*), em vez do especificador numeral (*doisprezece*) de 14a, conforme o original. Em relação ao contexto *ses humes et ses pers* (15c), a tradução oferecida em 15a (*oamenii şi perii lui*) está muito próxima do original, valorizando-se as raízes latinas comuns (*hōmo, homīnem* e *par, -is*), enquanto a versão lida em 15b (*oamenii lui*) confere uma estilística genérica à designação dos combatentes, optando somente pelo nome *oamenii*.

- (13) a. «... — “Nîcîcînd” răspunde Ganelon — “nepotu-i cît trăieşte; nu-i astfel de vasal sub a cerului mantie. Şi nespuse de viteaz i-Olivier, al lui tovarăş; cei doisprezece *peri*, ce-i sunt atît de scumpi lui Carol...”» (*Roland Ta*, XLI, p. 16)

- b. «“Nu, zice Ganelon, Roland cît va trăi./Un bun vasal ca el să nu cauţi sub cer/Cu el deopotrivă, amicu-i Olivier./Cei doisprezece *pairi*, de Carol mult iubiţi...”» (*Roland Tb*, XLI, 544-547, p. 57)

- c. «Şi Ganelon: “Cît vor trăi anume/Nepotul său, ce n-are soţ pe lume,/Şi Olivier, prietenu-i iubit./Şi *pairii*, care Carol i-a-ndrăgit...”» (*Roland B*, XLI, p. 31)

- d. «“... — Ço n’iert,” dist Guenes, “tant cum vivet sis niés:/N’at tel vassal suz la cape del ciel./Mult par est proz sis cumpainz, Olivier;/Les .XII. *pers*, que Carles ad tant chers...”» (*Roland*, XLI, 544-547, pp. 42-43)

- (14) a. «Carol culcat ie, dar durere are, pentru Roland; de-Olivier îi pasă fără socoteală, *de doisprezece peri, şi de Francezii* toţi, ce a lăsat la Ronseval, morţi sîngerăţi.» (*Roland Ta*, CLXXXIV, p. 5)

- b. «Carol pentru Roland simte crudă durere,/Nici pentru-Olivier nu află mîngîiere./*Pe pairii săi iubiţi şi pe francezi* îi plînge/Ucişi, la Rencesvals ei zac în bălţi de sînge.» (*Roland Tb*, CLXXXIV, p. 215)

- c. «Carles se gist, mais doel ad de Rollant/E d’Oliver li peiset mult forment,/Des .XII. *pers e de la franceise gent*/Qu’en Rencesvals ad laiset morz sanglenz.» (*Roland*, CLXXXIV, 2513-2515, pp. 190-191)

⁵⁸ DG regista as variantes gráficas *pair, per, per, par, pier*. Ver *pair* em DG.

⁵⁹ Ver *pair* em CNRTL Ver também o comentário de B. Grigoriu, em relação ao uso do termo *per*, em que se aponta para a possibilidade de estender a conotação de nobreza ao referente feminino.

⁶⁰ A variante fonética *peri*, proposta pelo tradutor E. Tănase, mostra a tendência de hiper-arcaizar o texto traduzido, sendo uma variante sem tradição na língua romena.

- (15) a. «Un lucru pe Roland îl auzii spunând: că n'ar muri într'un regat străin, fără să meargă mai departe decât *oamenii și perii lui*» (*Roland Ta*, CCIV, p. 73)
b. «Pe-al meu nepot Roland zicînd l-am auzit/Că pe pămînt străin de și-ar afla sfîrșit,/Ca *oamenii lui* toți mai mult va-nainta» (*Roland Tb*, CCIV, 2863-2865, p. 241)
c. «D'une raisun oï Rollant parler:/Ja ne murreit en estrange regnet/Ne trespassast *ses humes e ses pers*» (*Roland*, CCIV, 2863-2865, p. 216)

3.2.7 Rege

O vocăbulu *rege* (16a, b, c; 17a, b), ilustrado pelas traduções dos textos *Roland*, *Bérout* e *Demanda*, representa a forma equivalente latina do francês *rei/roi* (16d; 17d; 19b), do português *rei* (20b). Além desta correspondência total léxico-semântica, a tradução *Roland B* do exemplo 18a, individualiza-se pela tradução do contexto definido *li empereres* (18d) pela forma, igualmente, definida *regele*, designando a graduação da hierarquia aristocrata que remete para o reinado, em vez do império.

- (16) a. «Sperjurul Ganelon, nelegiuitul, veni și iel. Cu mare viclenie începe să vorbească. Și zice *regelui*: “Păzit să fii de Dumnezeu!...”» (*Roland Ta*, LIV, p. 20)
b. «Și iată că sosește solul mișel, sperjur./Cu multă viclenie începe să vorbească./El *regelui* îi zice: “Domnul să te-ocrotească!...”» (*Roland Tb*, LIV, 674-676, p. 69)
c. «Și trădătorul Ganelon sosește/Cu viclenie *regelui* vorbește: “Să te ajute Domnul cel de sus...”» (*Roland B*, LIV, p. 35)
d. «Guenes i vint, li fels, li parjurez./Par grant veisdie cumencet a parler/E dist *al rei*: “Salvez seiez de Deu!”» (*Roland*, LIV, 674-676, p. 52)
(17) a. «Iubite sire, scump tovarăș, pe Dumnezeu, ce crezi de asta? Atâția bravi vasali vezi la pământ zăcînd! Ie drept să plîngem dulcea Franță cea frumoasă: de-asemenea baroni, pustie cum rămâne! Ei, *rege, prietene*, de ce nu iești aici?» (*Roland Ta*, CXXVIII, p. 46)
b. «Vede-ntre-ai lui, Roland, prăpădul fără seamă,/Pe prietenul său bun, Olivier, îl cheamă: “Sire și drag prieten, îmi spune al tău gînd./Atîția buni prieteni vezi la pământ zăcînd!/De plîns e dulcea Franță, țara noastră iubită:/De bunii ei baroni rămas-a pustiită!/O, *rege și prieten* de ce nu ești aici?...”» (*Roland Tb*, CXXVIII, 1691-1697, p. 147)
c. «“Bel sire, chers cumpainz, pur Deu, que vos en haitet?/Tanz bons vassals veez gesir par tere!/Pleindre poiûms France dulce, la bele./De tels barons cum or remeint deserte!/E! *reis, amis*, que vos ici nen estes?...”» (*Roland*, CXXVIII, 1691-1697, p. 130)
(18) a. «În drum spre țară, *regele* trecu/Puternica cetate Galna de văzu/Roland o cucerise.» (*Roland B*, LIII, p. 35)
b. «S'apropie de țară *împăratul*: ajuns-a la cetatea Galne. O a cuprins-o contele Roland și-a nimicir-o» (*Roland Ta*, LIII, p. 19)
c. «Se-apropie-*mpăratul* de Franța, a lui Țară./Ajuns-a la cetatea Galne, și ea barbară:/Roland o-asediază, curînd e cucerită» (*Roland Tb*, LIII, 661-663, p. 67)
d. «*Li empereres* aproismet sun repaire/Venuz en est a la citet de Galne:/Li quens Rollant, il l'ad e prise e fraite» (*Roland*, LIII, 661-663, p. 52)
(19) a. «“Prietene, aș vrea să-mi spui,/La *rege*-ai fost? La curtea lui?”» (*Bérout D*, 2497-2498, p. 136)
b. «“Amis, di moi, se Dex t'anort,/Fus tu donc pus a la *roi* cort?”» (*Bérout*, 2497-2498, p. 136)
(20) a. «— Fiule, sînteți dăruit cu frumusețe trupească, dar Dumnezeu, prin a Sa bunătate, vă face să vă asemuiți în virtute cu semînția *Regelui Bam*.» (*Căutarea*, 14, p. 22)
b. «— Filho, muito sodes fremoso, mas Deus, por sua bondade, vos faça semelhar em cavalaria o vosso linhagem de *rei Bam*.» (*Demanda*, 14, p. 28)

3.2.8 Rigă

O termo *rigă* (21a; 22a; 23a; 24a; 25a; 26a; 27a), cujo percurso literário é emblemático na cultura romena⁶¹, sinónimo arcaico da forma *rege*, acima comentada, é o preferido nas traduções dos textos *Lancelot*, *Tristan Nebun*, *Bérout*, *Nibelungenlied Si*, *Beowulf*. Através desta opção de tradução, sublinha-se a dimensão literária e arcaica da narrativa que designa, em todos os contextos, o grau da hierarquia aristocrata do texto original.

(21) a. «— *Rigă Artur*, în temnița mea țin mulțime de cavaleri, de doamne și domnițe de pe moșia și din casa ta» (*Lancelot S*, p. 8)

b. «*Rois Artus*, j'ai an ma prison/De ta terre et de ta meison/Chevaliers, dames et puceles» (*Lancelot*, 53-55, p. 2)

(22) a. «Răspunse *riga* că-i era dată suferința, dacă nimic atuncea nu putea schimba» (*Lancelot S*, p. 8)

b. «*Li rois* respont qu'il li estuet/Sofrir, s'amander ne le puet» (*Lancelot*, 63-64, p. 3)

(23) a. «Isold'ai fost de tot iertată/cu jurământul cel făcut/așa cum *riga Marc* a vrut» (*Tristan Nebun*, p. 119)

b. «*Ysolt*, guarie al jugement/Del serement e de la lai/Ke feistes en curt *le rai*.» (*Folie Tristan*, 832-834, p. 47)

(24) a. «Chiar noaptea, *riga* a vrut sfat.» (*Bérout D*, 2510, p. 136)

b. «*Li rois* esvelle son barnage.» (*Bérout*, 2510, p. 136)

(25) a. «În care se face arătare cum a peșit-o Attila, vestitul *rigă* al hunilor, pe frumoasa crăiasă Kriemhilda» (*Nibelungi P*, A șasesprezecea Întîmplare, p. 102)

b. «*Wie König Etzel* um Kriemhilden sandte» (*Nibelungenlied Si*, Zwanzigstes Ubenteuer, p. 179)

(26) a. «În vremea aceea se săvîrși din viață crăiasa Helke, soața lui Attila, preaputernicul *rigă* al hunilor... Sfătuit de prietenii și sfetnicii săi, vestitul crai se hotărî s-o pețască pe crăiasa Kriemhilda, frumoasa văduvă a răposatului Siegfried.» (*Nibelungi P*, p. 102)

b. «*Das war in jenen zeiten*, • als Frau Helke starb/Und der *könig Etzel* • um andre Frauen warb/Da rieten seine Freunde • in Burgondenland/Zu einer stolzen Wittwe, • die war Frau Kriemhild genannt.» (*Nibelungenlied Si*, p. 179)

(27) a. «Reazim a fost un răstimp *rigăi Heorogar*» (*Beowulf DL*, XXXI, p. 102)

b. «A while it was held by *Heorogar king*» (*Beowulf*, XXXI, p. 64)

3.2.9 Suzeran

Na tradução de *Beowulf*, foi possível encontrar a ocorrência do lexema *suzeran* (28a) que se poderia explicar contextualmente, sendo sugerido, do ponto de vista semântico, por várias formas do original (*higher*, *rule*, *realm*), formas essas que enfatizam a expressão do exercício do poder: *higher the king ... rule ... realm* (60b).

(28) a. «Erau de-o măsură/moșiile lor, de-o măsură asemeni moștenitelor drepturi./prin naștere-naltă; numai că *Hygelac*/mai strălucit stăpînea, fiind *suzeran* în Scandia țară.» (*Beowulf DL*, XXXI, p. 103)

b. «They held in common/land alike by their line of birth,/inheritance, home: but *higher the king*/because of his *rule* o'er the *realm* itself.» (*Beowulf*, XXXI, p. 65)

3.2.10 Voievod

O termo de origem eslava *voievod* (29a; 30a) representa, na tradução romena, uma equivalência semântica das formas *the leader* (29b) e *the ruler* (30b) de *Beowulf*. A marca estilística da tradução é evidenciada através da evocação de um referente da hierarquia militar arcaica.

⁶¹ DA/DLR, DLRLC ilustram o emprego deste termo arcaico em várias obras literárias.

- (29) a. «deși mai temut în tărie cât toți fiii pământului,/brațul nebiruit cu care Prea-Bunul blagoslovise/viteazul voievod.» (*Beowulf DL*, XXXI, p. 103)
b. «though of sons of earth his strength was greatest,/a glorious gift that God had sent/the splendid leader.» (*Beowulf*, XXXI, p. 65)
(30) a. «Și nici n-o socot cea mai searbădă luptă/din câte cunosc eu încaiere, pe-aceea în care căzu Hygelac./voievodul geaților» (*Beowulf DL*, XXXIII, p. 110)
b. «Not least was that of hand-to-hand fights where Hygelac fell,/when the ruler of Geats in rush of battle» (*Beowulf*, XXXIII, p. 69)

Outros elementos lexicais que põem em relevo a tendência de arcaizar o texto traduzido são representados pela categoria dos elementos cultos ou pseudo-arcaicos, sobre os quais reiteramos o facto de alguns conhecerem atestações na literatura romena a partir do século XIX, como se referiu *supra*⁶², enquanto outros parecem conhecer o uso exclusivo nestas traduções. Tratar-se-ia, provavelmente, em ambos os casos, de opções de tradução determinadas pelo correspondente do texto de origem, por um lado, e por outro, sustentadas pelo uso livresco na literatura autóctone. Neste sentido, foram selecionados, em ordem alfabética, os seguintes casos dos textos em análise.

3.2.11 Almasur/Emir

A forma *uns almaçurs*⁶³ (31d), adaptada foneticamente em romeno e limitada ao uso culto no exemplo *un almasur* (31a, b), designa o título honorífico na hierarquia oriental, segundo mostram e motivam também os trechos narrativos selecionados das traduções do texto *Roland* (31d). É igualmente relevante chamar a atenção para o facto de uma das traduções de *Roland* apresentar uma variação léxico-semântica no mesmo contexto, ou seja, emprega-se o termo *emirul*⁶⁴ (31c) para equivaler o lexema *uns almaçurs* (31d).

- (31) a. «Un almasur ie-apoi din Moriane: Nu se găsește altul mai nelegiuit în tot pământul Spaniei.» (*Roland Ta*, LXXIII, p. 27)
b. «Păși un almasur venit din Moriane./Mișel nespus și-avînd privirile dușmane» (*Roland Tb*, LXXIII, 909-910, p. 85)
c. «Emirul Moriane iată vine./Mai ticălos ca el nici unul nu-i» (*Roland B*, LXXIII, p. 42)
d. «Uns almaçurs i ad de Moriane;/N'ad plus felun en la tere d'Espaigne.» (*Roland*, LXXIII, 909-910, p. 70)

3.2.12 Amurafle/Emir

Um outro termo importante é *uns amuraflies*⁶⁵ (32d), ocorrente em *Roland*, que conhece o mesmo tratamento fonético em romeno na forma *un amurafle* (32a). Além do equivalente livresco *un amurafle*, duas das traduções de *Roland* oferecem o correspondente *emir* (32b, c). A própria forma francesa antiga conhece uma variante fonética registada no caso 33d, *li amiralz*. Esta forma é traduzida por *emir* nas duas traduções analisadas (33a, b).

- (32) a. «Și iat-un amurafle, din Balaguez de fel;/La trup bine făcut, la față luminos» (*Roland Tb*, LXXII, 894-895, p. 85)
b. «Ie-acolo un emir din Balaghet; trup are nespus de frumos, și fața mândră, luminoasă.» (*Roland Ta*, LXXII, p. 26)

⁶² Ver n. 63.

⁶³ Em francês, do árabe (*al*) *manşūr* («le victorieux»). Ver *almaçor* em *LLF*.

⁶⁴ *DA/DLR* apresenta uma etimologia múltipla, do turco *emir* e do francês *émir*. Ver *emir* em *DA/DLR*.

⁶⁵ Em francês, do árabe *amīr-al-(bahr)* «commandant de la mer» ou *amīr-ar-rahl* «commandant de la flotte». Ver *amiral* em *CNRTL*.

- c. «*Emirul Balaguer e un sarazin/Cu trup voinic, cu chip frumos, senin*» (*Roland B*, LXXII, p. 41)
- d. «*Uns amurafles i ad de Balaguez,/Cors ad mult gent e le vis fier e cler*» (*Roland*, LXXII, 894-895, p. 70)
- (33) a. «Mult ie viteaz Carol al dulcei Franțe; *emirul* de iel însă nu se teme, nici înfrică.» (*Roland Ta*, 3579-CCLIX-3588, p. 91)
- b. «Al dulcei Franțe rege, carol, viteaz e foarte;/Dar nu se teme-*emirul* de el, și nici de moarte.» (*Roland Tb*, CCLIX, 3579-3580, p. 299)
- c. «Carol al dulcei Franțe-i curajos;/*Emirul* nu se teme, nu-i fricos.» (*Roland B*, CCLIX, p. 72)
- d. «Mult est vassal Carles de France dulce;/Li *amiralz*, il nel crent ne ne dutet.» (*Roland*, CCLIX, 3579-3580, p. 268)

3.2.13 Cid, Campeador, Cid Campeador, Mío Cid, Mío Cid Campeador

O caracter exclusiv do emprego de alguns termos mantém-se no caso das traduções do *Cantar de Mío Cid*, como se observou no caso de *almasur* e *amurafle* que ocorrem somente nas traduções de *Roland*. Como se pode observar, as traduções do texto *Cid* são ainda mais conservadoras em relação às estruturas em que se nota uma variação semântico-estilística na função apelativa. Ora, além do nome *Cid* (34a, b; 37b), são mantidos literalmente *Campeador* (35a; 36a.1) e os sintagmas *Cid Campeador* (36b), *Mío Cid* (36a.2; 69a), *Mío Cid Campeador* (38a). Ao longo de cada tradução analisada, é evidente uma alternância no que respeita à equivalência estilística dos títulos do herói do poema que evidenciam o seu caráter destemido. Há casos em que, na versão romena, parece procurar-se elementos prosódicos e fazem com que se mantenham o termo original (*campeadorul*), que assegura o efeito estilístico, e a sua tradução (*luptătorul*) no excerto *Mulțumi Campeadorul-luptătorul neînfricat* (36a), em que *luptătorul* reduplica semanticamente *campeadorul*. Ou há mesmo alternância entre somente manter (*Cidul Meu Campeador*, 38b) ou somente traduzir o lexema que sublinha a valentia na designação do protagonista (*Cidul Meu Luptător*, 36b). Salienta-se, de novo, a hipótese de estarmos perante a tendência para manter o caracter arcaico do texto original, ou seja, perante uma tradução orientada para a/o língua/texto original, para que o leitor romeno possa (ob)ter uma imagem fiel do mundo medieval ibérico.

- (34) a. «“...Cît vrea *Cidul* să îi dăm, spune-ne, haide, Martín./Și pentru un an de zile ce dobîndă-o să primim?”/Le răspunse Antolinez, ca un om cu chibzuință:“*Mío Cid* vrea doar atîta cît îi face trebuință...”» (*Cid B*, 9, p. 148)
- b. «“...*Lui Cid*, însă, ne spune, cam cît i-ar trebui?/Și pentru anu-ntreg el ce ne-ar dărui?”/Răspunde Antolínez ca omul înțelept:“Să n-aveți grijă, căci *Cidul* va cere doar ce-i drept...”» (*Cid T*, 129-130, p. 24)
- c. «“...Mas dezidnos *del Çid*, de qué será pagado,/o qué ganancia nos dará por todo aqueste año?”/Respuso Martín Antolínez a guisa de menbrado: “*myo Çid* querrá lo que ssea aguisado...”» (*Cid*, 9, 129-130, p. 1030)
- (35) a. «“...Diego și Fernand, infanții Carrión, vă spun, ar vrea/Fiicele-i să le pețescă, gineri ar dori să-i fie./Eu vă cer ca de la mine să purtați astă solie/Ca să afle *Don Rodrigo de Bivar Campeador*,/Îi va crește mare cinstea și puterea îi va crește/De cu frații Carrión prin nuntire se-nrudește.”» (*Cid B*, 102, p. 166)
- b. «“...Diego și Fernando, doi de neam mare fii,/Pe fiicele lui *Cid* și le-ar dori soții;/Eu v-aș ruga soli buni și de nădejde-a-mi fi,/Și *Cidului viteaz* de asta a-i vorbi;/Va crește cinstea lui, averi mari multe-avînd/De gineri pe Infanții de Carrión luînd.”» (*Cid T*, 1900-1906, p. 94)
- c. «“...Dídago e Ferrando, los iffantes de Carrión,/sabor han de casar con sus fijas amas a dos./Seed buenos mensageros, e ruégovoslo yo/que gelo digades *al buen Campeador*:/abrà y ondra e creçrà en onor,/por conssagrar con iffantes de Carrión.”» (*Cid*, 1901-1906, p. 71)

- (36) a. «Și îi mai dădu provizii să-i ajungă, fel de fel./Mulțumi *Campeadorul-luptătorul* (a.1) neînfricat./Și cu el îi mulțumiră toți ce-n preajmă-i s-au aflat./Spuse Antolínez Martín, ascultați ce-a spus acum:/"O, *mío Cid*, (a.2) acela care te-ai născut într-un ceas bun..."» (*Cid B*, 5, p. 146)
- b. «De câte-aveau nevoie, de toate se-ngrijea./*Cidul Campeador* nespuse se veselea/Și toți aceia care-l serveau, asemenea./Vorbi Antolínez, așa a început:/"*Cidul meu Luptător*, în bun ceas te-ai născut!..."» (*Cid T*, 68-71, p. 22)
- c. «de todo conducho bien los ovo bastidos./Pagós *mío Çid el Campeador* conplido/e todos los otros que van a so çervicio./Fabló Martín Antolínez, odredes lo que a dicho:/"ya *Canpeador*, en buen ora fostes naçido!..."» (*Cid*, 5, 68-71, p. 1028)
- (37) a. «*Mío Cid* dădu din umeri și din cap el clătină» (*Cid B*, 2, p. 144)
- b. «Clădește-și *Cidul* capul și umeri osteniți» (*Cid T*, 13, p. 20)
- c. «Meçió *mío Çid* los ombros y engrameó la tiesta» (*Cid*, 2, 13, p. 1025)
- (38) a. «În Valencia viteazul *mío Cid Campeador*/I-aștepta și de-nfîlnire el se pregătea de zor.» (*Cid B*, 104, p. 168)
- b. «În ăst timp la Valencia, *Cidul Meu Campeador*/Pentru-nfîlnirea mare la pregătiri da zor» (*Cid T*, 1985-1986, p. 97)
- c. «Dentro en Valençia *mío Çid el Campeador*/non lo detarda, pora las vistas se adobó.» (*Cid*, 104, 1985-1986, p. 1100)

3.2.14 Don

O termo *don* é uma escolha preferida por via literária ibérica, *Cid* e *Demanda*. Assinala-se a sua ocorrência nos exemplos 39-43. Há alternância no que se refere uma equivalência total ou parcial. Ou seja, evidenciam-se exemplos em que *don Rodrigo* (38c) é traduzido literalmente por *don Rodrigo*, *don Rodrig* (39a, b), *dom Lançarot do Lago* (42b) por *don Lancelot do Lago* (42a) e *dom Galvam* (43b) por *don Galvan* (43a). Há outros exemplos em que *el conde don Remond* (40c) conhece também o equivalente total *Contele Don Ramón* (40a) ou outro parcial *Contele Ramón* (40b). Para o contexto *Del conde don Remont* (41c) retém-se, em cada tradução colacionada, a imagem de um dos títulos originais da nobreza, ou seja, a tradução *Cid B* opta por *Contele Ramón* (41a), enquanto a tradução *Cid T* mantém *Don Ramón* (41b).

- (39) a. «"Vezi de tine *Don Rodrigo*, petrece, te-nveselește./Mai curînd aș vrea să mor căci mîncarea nu-mi priește."» (*Cid B*, 61, p. 158)
- b. «"Mîncîncă, *Don Rodrig*, te veselește, bea./Eu, nu mîncarea noastră, ci moartea mi-o doresc."» (*Cid T*, 1028-1029, p. 61)
- c. «— "Comede, *don Rodrigo*, e penssedes de folgar./que yo dexas mê morir, que non quiero comer al."» (*Cid*, 56, 1028-1029, p. 1064)
- (40) a. «*Contele Don Ramón* atuncea îi răspunde:/"Tot aurul și-argintul ați stat și l-ați prădat..."» (*Cid T*, 3237-3238, p. 147)
- b. «*Contele Ramón*, ca jude, conților iar le-a vorbit: "ce-ați primit argint și aur, banii, voi i-ați cheltuit..."» (*Cid B*, 137, p. 188)
- c. «Luego respondió *el conde don Remond*:/"el oro e la plata espendiésteslo vos..."» (*Cid*, 3237-3238, p. 1146)
- (41) a. «*Mío Cid* ducea cu dînsul, precum știți, o pradă mare./Coborîndu-se din munte el în vale se oprișe./De la *Contele Ramón* o solie și venise» (*Cid B*, 56, p. 156)
- b. «O pradă mare Díaz poartă pe drum agale./Un munte-nalt coboară, ajunge jos în vale./Trimise *Don Ramón* la *Cidul Meu* solie» (*Cid T*, 973-975, p. 60)
- c. «*Mío Çid don Rodrigo* trae ganancia grand,/diçe de una sierra e llegava a un val./*Del conde don Remont* venido lês mensaje» (*Cid*, 56, 973-975, p. 1062)
- (42) a. «— Îl caut, spuse ea, pe *don Lancelot do Lago*. Se află aici?» (*Căutarea*, 1, p. 15)
- b. «— Eu demando, disse ela, por *dom Lançarot do Lago*. É aqui?» (*Demanda*, 1, p. 20)
- (43) a. «— Iată-l, stă la fereastră aceea, vorbind cu *don Galvan*.» (*Căutarea*, 1, p. 15)

b. «Veede-lo: está a aquela freesta, falando com *dom Galvam*.» (*Demanda*, 1, p. 20)

3.3.15 Graf, marcgraf

As traduções do texto *Nibelungenlied* oferecem a oportunidade de se registarem na língua romena novos usos dos títulos da nobreza germânica. Referimo-nos às formas *graf*⁶⁶ e *marcgraf*⁶⁷ registadas nos exemplos 44-47. O exemplo 47 vem ilustrar a opção do tradutor pela forma equivalente latina *contele* (47a), *supra* examinada.

(44) a. «Îl pomenesc pe Hagen, de Dancwart cel sprintar,/Pe Ortwein cavalerul din Metz, cu suflet rar —/Pe cei doi *grafi*: pe Gere și Eckewart; nu uit/Pe Volker din Alȝeia cu daruri prea-frumoase-mpodobit» (*Nibelungi T*, 9, p. 18)

b. «Daz was von Tronege Hagene • und ouch der bruoder sîn,/Dancwart der vil snelle, • von Metzen Ortwîn,/die zwêne *marcgrâven* • Gêre und Ekkewart,/Volkêr von Alzeije, • mit ganzem ellen wol bewart.» (*Nibelungenlied Ba*, 9, p. 3)

(45) a. «Spre soața lui se-ndreaptă *marcgraful* zîmbitor/iar Gotelinda-i rîde cuprinsă viu de dor./Se bucură că vine acasă sântos./De griji și dînsul scapă și este iarăși soțul drăgăstos.» (*Nibelungi T*, 1309, p. 292)

b. «Der voget von Bechelâren • ze sîme wîbe reit./der edelen *marcgrâvinne* • was daz niht ze leit,/daz er sô wol gesunder • was von Rîne komen./ir was ein teil ir swære • mit grôzen vrêudén benomen.» (*Nibelungenlied Ba*, 1309, p. 223)

(46) a. «Bine-ați venit în această țară, voi nobili cavaleri! strigă *marcgraful Rüdiger* oaspeților burgunzi, ieșindu-le bucuros întru întâmpinare la porțile cetății Bechlaren.» (*Nibelungi P*, p. 140)

b. «Uls sie der *Markgraf* • zu sich kommen sah,/ Rüdiger der schnelle • mie fröhlich sprach er da:/'Willkommen mir, ihr Herren • und die in euerm Lehn./Hier in diesem Lande • seid ihr gerne gesehn.'» (*Nibelungenlied Si*, p. 249)

(47) a. «*Contele Wertheim* n-ar fi vrut/Să fie mercenar aci,/Plată ca asta nu i-ar prii.» (*Parsifal*, Cartea a IV-a, p. 253)

b. «mîn *hêrre der grâf von Wertheim*/wær ungern soldier dâ gewesn:/er möht ir soldes niht genesn.» (*Parzival*, Buch IV, 184, 4-6)

3.2.16 Infançon

Com o plural *infançoni* (48a; 49a) voltamos ao texto ibérico *Cid*, em que sublinhámos a sua ocorrência numa das traduções⁶⁸ deste texto, *Cid T*. Num primeiro caso ilustrado (48), nota-se uma carga semântica com carácter geral, indicando, na hierarquia social⁶⁹, um outro título referencial dos personagens chamados ao conselho pelo rei. Contudo, num segundo caso (49), em que é possível o paralelismo estilístico entre as duas traduções de *Cid*, a versão *Cid T* mantém o pseudo-arcaísmo culto *infançoni* (49a), com equivalente morfológico segundo a norma romena⁷⁰, enquanto a versão *Cid B* oferece um equivalente estilístico autóctone *nobili mărunți* (49b). O oxímoro da opção de tradução permite ao leitor do texto de destino entender a pouca consideração que os Infantes de Carrión manifestam, palpável na sua posterior perdição, pelas filhas de Cid.

⁶⁶ DA/DLR regista a forma arcaica *graf* com a variante *grof* por via úngara. Ver *graf* em DA/DLR.

⁶⁷ DA/DLR regista a forma arcaica *marcgraf* com as variantes adaptadas *margraf*, *margrav* por via alemã. Ver *marcgraf* em DA/DLR.

⁶⁸ A segunda tradução, realizada por Victor Bercescu, apresenta alguns passos narrativos sob forma resumida e cursiva e, nestes casos, a correspondência é irrelevante para a análise. Cf. *Cid B*/133, 184.

⁶⁹ DLE regista que se trata de um 'hidalgo que en sus heredamientos tenía potestad y señorío limitados'. Ver *infanzón* em DLE.

⁷⁰ A terminação *-i* é, na flexão nominal, a marca do plural masculino.

(48) a. «Oamenii-mi vor străbate întregul meu regat/Vestind că la Toledo doresc a ține sfat,/Și deci să se adune și Conți și *infançoni*,/Și-oi porunci să vină și cei doi Carrióni,/Ce au o socoteală lui Ruy Díaz a-i da» (*Cid T*, 2962-2966, p. 135)

b. «andarán mios porteros por todo el reyno mio,/pora dentro en Toledo pregonarán mie cort,/que allá me vayan cuemdes e *ifançones*;/mandaré commo i vayan ifantes de Carrión,/e commo den derecho a mio Çid el Campeador» (*Cid*, 2962-2966, p. 1136)

(49) a. «Soții ni se cad fiice de regi, ori de-mpărați,/Fiice de *infançoni* luînd, ne-am înjosit» (*Cid T*, 3297-3298, p. 149)

b. «Noi putem să luăm fete și de regi sau de-mpărați,/Fiice de *nobili mărunți* nu ne trebuie, aflați.» (*Cid B*, 141, p. 189)

c. «deviemos casar con fijas de reyes o de enperadores,/ca non perteneçien fijas de *ifançones*.» (*Cid*, 3297-3298, p. 1148)

3.2.17 Infante

Um outro exemplo selecionado das traduções de *Cid* vem ilustrar o emprego do plural *infanții* (50a, b), correndo a *los ifantes* (50c). O seu uso é livresco, dado que a experiência histórico-social romena foi distinta, neste aspeto, da experiência da Península Ibérica.

(50) a. «*Infanții*, peste ele, mai au mult de plătit./Averea nu le-ajunge, iau bani cu împrumut,/Ies rău din treaba asta, cum nu o-ar fi crezut.» (*Cid T*, 3247-3249, p. 147)

b. «Totul au plătit *infanții* Cidului viteaz și bun./Neavînd deajuns să deie conții s-au împrumutat,/Nu pot zice că prea veseli pîn' la urmă au scăpat.» (*Cid B*, 137, p. 188)

c. «pagaron *los ifantes* al que en buen ora nació;/enprstanles de lo ageno, que non les cumple lo so./Mal escapan jogados, sated, desta razón.» (*Cid*, 3247-3249, p. 1146)

3.2.18 Messire, monsenior

O emprego das variantes *messire* (51-54) e *monsenior* (55) aproxima-nos, naturalmente, dos textos franceses. Há registos, como se pode ver pelos excertos selecionados, nas traduções dos textos *Perceval*, *Yvain* e *Romans*. No caso 54, é possível observar a prevalência que se dá, na tradução, à forma *messire* (54a), apesar de o original registar *mon seignor* (54b). Este facto poderia levar-nos a pensar numa opção de tradução que valoriza a expressividade da vogal *e*, a fim de obter o efeito lírico com a preposição *peste* «...cînd dădu acolo *peste messire Yvain*...». Além deste valor expressivo, no que respeita ao plano semântico, nas formas *messire*⁷¹ e *monsenior*⁷² estamos perante usos, na função apelativa (52) ou referencial (51; 53; 54; 55), dos títulos de cortesia, de acordo com o original.

(51) a. «*Messire Gauvain* se îndreptă la galop spre el și-i zise fără dușmănie» (*Perceval P*, p. 79)

b. «Et *messire Gauvains* se tret/Vers lui tote une voie anblant,/Sanz fere nul felon sanblant» (*Perceval*, 4432-4434, pp. 794-795)

(52) a. «Ia, zi-mi, *messire Yvain*, vei pleca la drum în noaptea asta încă sau în zori?» (*Yvain S*, p. 12)

b. «Or tost, por Deu, *mes sire Yvain*,/Movroiz vos anuit ou demanin?» (*Yvain*, 601-602, p. 24)

(53) a. «Cavalerul l-a salutat mai întâi pe seniorul Gauvain, apoi răspuns i-a dat *messire Gauvain*.» (*Lancelot S*, p. 12)

b. «Li chevaliers a salüé/Mon seignor Gauvain premerains,/Et puis lui *mes sire Gauvains*.» (*Lancelot*, 276-278, p. 12)

⁷¹ Esta forma limita-se ao registo livresco, sem ecos na organização hierárquica social no território romeno.

⁷² O termo regista também significados no domínio clerical, mas não é o nosso propósito observar a dinâmica léxico-semântica na língua. Cf. *DA*.

- (54) a. «nu mică-i fu mirarea la început când dădu acolo peste *messire Yvain*» (*Yvain S*, p. 16)
b. «Quant *mon seignor Yvain* trova,/Si l-esmaia mout de premiers.» (*Yvain*, 976-977, p. 39)
- (55) a. «— Seniore, zise fata către *monsieurul Gauvain*, sînt sigură că cei doi sînt cavaleri de-ai regelui din Norgalles.» (*Romane T*, p. 184)
b. «Sire, dit la pucelle à *monseigneur Gauvain*, je crois bien que ceux-là sont de la maison du roi de Norgalles.» (*Romans*, II, p. 120)

3.2.19 Senior

Por um lado, do ponto de vista da correspondência, o vocábulo *senior* (56a, b, c; 57a; 58a; 59a; 63a) encontra-se utilizado nas traduções, em primeiro lugar, como correspondente total de *seignur* (56d; 57b; 58b, 59b) ou de *señor* (63c), segundo se pode ler nos contextos extraídos das versões de *Roland*, *Bérout*, *Yvain* e *Cid*, e, em segundo lugar, como equivalente semântico do título de nobreza *sire* do original (60c; 61c; 62c), segundo mostram os casos selecionados das versões de *Romans*, *Perceval* e *Yvain*. Por outro lado, do ponto de vista semântico, o termo evoca a cortesia e o poder: as ocorrências, na função apelativa do vocativo dos casos 56, 57, 60, 61 e 62, põem em evidência o valor semântico-estilístico da cortesia; enquanto as ocorrências, na função referencial dos casos 58 e 63, sublinham o poder. Como já se mencionou, além da fonte francesa, a forma de expressão cortês *senior* surge igualmente por via ibérica, através da versão *Cid T* (63a). Deve tratar-se, neste caso, além do semantismo referido, da valorização estilística dos elementos fonéticos que faz mesmo com que se mantenha a rima original: «... que nada pierda el *Campoador*;... que a él dizen *señor*/...» (63c), em comparação com «... să piardă viteazul *Luptător*;... și îl numesc *senior*...» (63a). A marca estilística, a nível fonético, no contexto idêntico, encontra-se também presente na rima da versão *Cid B* (63b), mas realizada através das estruturas verbais: «... stricăciune să nu-i faceți, *poruncesc*;... și stăpîn ei îl numesc/...» (63b). O termo *señor* é, neste caso (63b), semanticamente equivocado pela forma *stăpîn*, transmitindo, de uma forma mais clara e expressiva, o valor semântico do poder na sua dimensão social que o lexema original tem neste contexto.

- (56) a. «Marsilie le zice: “*Seniori*, veniți’nainte!”» (*Roland Ta*, LXXVI, p. 27)
b. «Marsilie le zice: “*Seniori*, v-apropiați!”» (*Roland Tb*, LXXVI, 943, p. 89)
c. «Zise Marsil: “*Seniori*, haide, veniți!”» (*Roland B*, LXXVI, p. 43)
d. «Ço dist Marsilie: “*Seignurs*, venez avant!”» (*Roland*, LXXVI, 943, p. 74)
- (57) a. «Am o scrisoare, *Seniori*,...» (*Bérout D*, 2525, p. 137)
b. «“*Seignors*, un brief m’est ci tramis...”» (*Bérout*, 2525, p. 137)
- (58) a. «aceștia voiau să-l răzbune pe *seniorul* lor, întins deja în sicriu» (*Yvain S*, p. 17)
b. «Qui lor *seignor* vangier voloient/Qui ja estoit an biere mis.» (*Yvain*, 1058-1059, p. 42)
- (59) a. «Cavalerul l-a salutat mai întâi pe *seniorul* Gauvain, apoi răspuns i-a dat *messire Gauvain*.» (*Lancelot S*, p. 12)
b. «Li chevaliers a salüé/*Mon seignor* Gauvain premerains,/Et puis lui mes sire Gauvains.» (*Lancelot*, 276-278, p. 12)
- (60) a. «— Seniore cavalier, îi spuse doamna de Nohant, îl eliberez eu de dragul dumitale.» (*Romane T*, p. 131)
b. «— Seniore, spuse Doamna din Nohant, îl eliberez eu, din respect pentru tine.» (*Romane G*, p. 78)
c. «— Sire chevalier, dit la dame de Nohant, je l’affranchis pour l’amour de vous.» (*Romans*, II, p. 28)
- (61) a. «— Seniore, te-aș fi salutat de ți-aș și cunoscut inima la fel de bine ca pe a mea.» (*Perceval P*, p. 78)

- b. «Et dit: “Sire, je vos eusse/Salué, se auel seusse/Vostre cuer com je faz le mien...”» (*Perceval*, 4435-4437, p. 795)
- (62) a. «— *Seniore*, răspunse scutierul, fiți fără grijă; nimeni nu va afla vreodată ceva de la mine.» (*Yvain S*, p. 14)
- b. «— “Sire”, fet îl, “il an est pes,/Que ja par moi nus nel savra...”» (*Yvain*, 744-746, p. 29)
- (63) a. «Nimic nu vreau să piardă viteazul Luptător;/Și celor ce-l urmează și îl numesc *senior*,/De le-am luat averi, ‘napoi să li se dea» (*Cid T*, 1361-1363, p. 72)
- b. «Cidului vreo stricăciune să nu-i faceți, poruncesc;/Iară cei ce sînt cu dînsul și *stăpîn* ei îl numesc/— deși eu le-am luat avutul — înapoi li-l dăruiesc» (*Cid B*, 82, p. 163)
- c. «“...non quiero que nada pierda el CampOador;/a todas las escuelas que a él dizen *señor*/por que los deseredé, todo gelo suelto yo...”» (*Cid*, 1361-1363, p. 1077)

3.2.20 Sire

No que diz respeito à forma de cortesia *sire* (64-72), os exemplos são múltiplos tratando-se de um lexema registado em vários textos traduzidos do francês, português e espanhol (*Roland*, *Folie Tristan*, *Yvain*, *Béroul*, *Demanda*, *Cid*). Há casos em que se reproduz a variante *sire* (64a, b; 65a, b; 66a, b, c; 67a, b; 68a; 69a; 70a), outros em que se traduz, do português, a variante *senhor* (71c), ou é amplificada, pela tradução, na função apelativa sugerida pelo texto espanhol (72a). Trata-se da marca estilística da reverência, da cortesia nas narrativas dos textos medievais e as traduções romenas mostram a tendência de a transmitir *ad litteram*.

- (64) a. «*Sire*’mpărat — zise Jofrei de-Anju — durerea asta mare n’o purta atât; ci poruncește să îi caute pe-ai noștri, pe care i-au ucis ai Spaniei în luptă» (*Roland Ta*, CCXI, p. 75)
- b. «*Sire*’mpărat, îi zice Gefrei d’Anjou, supus,/De-astă durere mare nu te lăsa răpus!/CI pune ca pe-ai noștri, ce zac morți pe cîmpie,/Uciși de sarazini în marea bătalie,/Să-i strîngă și-ntr-o groapă să-i pună împreună» (*Roland Tb*, CCXI, 2945-2949, pp. 247-249)
- c. «“*Sire* emperere”, ço dist Gefrei d’Anjou, “Ceste dolor ne demenez tant fort!/Par tut le camp faites querre les noz,/Que cil d’Espagne en la bataille unt mort...”» (*Roland*, CCXI, 2945-2948, pp. 222-224)
- (65) a. «Iubite *sire*, scump tovarăș, pe Dumnezeu, ce crezi de asta? Atîția bravi vasali vezi la pămînt zăcînd! Ie drept să plîngem dulcea Franță cea frumoasă: de- asemenea baroni, pustie cum rămîne! Ei, rege, prietene, de ce nu iești aici?» (*Roland Ta*, CXXVIII, p. 46)
- b. «“*Sire* și drag prieten, îmi spune al tău gînd,/Atîția buni prieteni vezi la pămînt zăcînd!/De plîns e dulcea Franță, țara noastră iubită:/De bunii ei baroni rămas-a pustiită!/O, rege și prieten de ce nu ești aici?...”» (*Roland Tb*, CXXVIII, 1693-1701, p. 147)
- c. «“Bel *sire*, chers cumpainz, pur Deu, que vos en haitet?/Tanz bons vassals veez gesir par tere!/Pleindre poüms France dulce, la bele./De tels barons cum or remeint deserte!/E! reis, amis, que vos ici nen estes?...”» (*Roland*, CXXVIII, 1693-1697, p. 130)
- (66) a. «veni nepot-său acolo, cu tunica de zale îmbrăcat: iel a prădat chiar Carcasonia; în mân’avea un rumen măr: “Poftim, iubite *sire*!” — zise Roland unchiului său, — “în dar îți dau coroanele-a toți regii.”» (*Roland Ta*, XXIX, p. 12)
- b. «Cînd iată pe nepotu-i în zale îmbrăcat,/De lîngă Carcasonie prăzi multe aducea;/În mîna lui un măr roșu-auriu ținea:/Mărite *sire* doamne — Roland prinse-a vorbi — /Comorile-a’ toți regii eu vreau a-și dăruia.» (*Roland Tb*, CCVIII, 384-388, p. 45)
- c. «Sosi Roland atunci în fața sa,/Venea din Caracasonia prădată,/În mîini cu-n măr, o poamă-mbujorată: “Slăvite *sire*, astăzi tu primește/Coroana ce pămîntul stăpînește!”» (*Roland B*, XXIX, p. 27)

- d. «Vint i ses niés, out vestue sa brunie,/E out predet dejuste Carcasonie;/En sa main tint une vermeille pume:/Tenez, bel sire, dist Rollant a sun uncle,/De trestuz reis vos present les curunes.» (Roland, XXIX, 385-388, p. 30)
- (67) a. «“Sire tovarășe și prietene, ceia să n’o mai spui. Când împăratul ne-a lăsat Francezii, pe-ăști douăzeci de mii, ni i-a ales deoparte: precât știut-a iel, fricos aci nu-i unul...”» (Roland Ta, LXXXVIII, p. 31)
- b. «“Sire și scump prieten, vorbe mari să lăsăm,/Cu francii ce-mpăratul ni i-a lăsat să stăm./El douăzeci de mii ne-a dat, oameni vîrtoși,/Pe cît știut-a Carol, nu-s între ei fricoși...”» (Roland Tb, LXXXVIII, 1113-1116, p. 101)
- c. «“Seniore prieten, taci, nu mai vorbi!/Căci împăratul ne-a lăsat aici/Doar franci aleși la douăzeci de mii./Fricos, știa, nici unul nu va fi...”» (Roland B, LXXXVIII, p. 48)
- d. «“Sire cumpainz, amis, nel dire ja!/Li emperere, ki Franceis nos laisat,/Itels .XX. milie en mist a une part/Sun escientre n’en i out un cuard.”» (Roland, LXXXVIII, 1113-1116, pp. 86-88)
- (68) a. «— Isolda: “Sire-ți mulțumesc”» (Tristan Nebun, p. 113)
- b. «“Sire, merci!” Țo dit Ysolt» (Folie Tristan, 541, p. 37)
- (69) a. «Spune-ne să știm și noi, mîndre sire, cînd vei porni pe calea martiriului, să fim și noi martori.» (Yvain S, p. 15)
- b. «Feites le nos savoir, biaux sire,/Quant vos iroiz a cel martire,/Que nos vos voudrons convoier.» (Yvain, 603-605, p. 24)
- (70) a. «“Dar Sire, tare-o mai iubesc”» (Bérout D, 1401, p. 87)
- b. «—Sire, j’am Yseut a merveille» (Bérout, 1401, p. 87)
- (71) a. «— Sire, voi merge, dar nu cu Domnia Voastră: un altul mă va conduce într-acolo.» (Căutarea, 7, p. 18)
- b. «— Senhor, eu irei, mas nom convosco: outrem me guirá i.» (Demanda, 7, p. 23)
- (72) a. «Ruy Díaz mîna iar regelui i-o sărută:“Sire, trei cavaleri cu sabia temută,/Eu îți încredințez, vasal fiindu-ți, rege...”» (Cid T, 3486-34888, p. 155)
- b. «Mio Çid al rey las manos le besó:“Estos mios tres cavalleros en vuestra mano son/d’aquí vos los acomiendo commo a rey e a señor...”» (Cid, 3486-3488, p. 1155)

Conclusão

No que diz respeito ao vocabulário do poder com referente masculino, designando os títulos de nobreza e hierarquias, foi possível identificar um uso preponderante de recursos linguístico-estilísticos arcaicos autóctones/latinos/eslavos/gregos/românicos em todos os textos analisados (*baron, boier, conte, crai, domn, duce, împărat, monarh, rege, rigă, seneșal, stăpîn, suzeran, voievod*), refletindo a experiența sociocultural autóctone e/ou ocidental. Quanto aos elementos livrescos, pseudo-arcaicos, alguns encontram-se registados na literatura beletrística romena a partir do século XIX (*don, graf, infante, marcgraf, monsenior, senior, sire*), enquanto outros não conhecem registos anteriores aos encontrados nas traduções estudadas, nem têm entrada lexical nos dicionários romenos (*almasur, almurafle, campeador, Cid, infançon, messire*).

Este tipo de literatura foi traduzido apenas no período moderno por vários motivos, como por exemplo: a cultura de leste, a ortodoxa, *versus* a cultura de oeste, a católica; as línguas de prestígio (eslavo, grego, no leste; latim, árabe, no oeste); modelos socioculturais distintos (no espaço romeno, por exemplo, os mosteiros eram locais de cultura em línguas de prestígio como o eslavo, grego, latim, e só mais tarde se tornaram locais de cultura em língua vernacular).

Em consequência, as traduções modernas dos textos arcaicos europeus, quer românicos, quer germânicos, conhecem tratamento diferente em relação ao léxico relacionado com o poder e com a autoridade social, familiar. Simplificando, algumas traduções apelam ao vocabulário romeno arcaico das relações de poder, enquanto outras exploram a terminologia culta de proveniência ocidental. Esta estratégia de fazer equivaler os termos que indicam o poder na

sociedade feudal ocidental pode ser também considerada como uma tentativa de recuperar elementos arcaicos românicos e de amplificar a receção do discurso medieval.

Bibliografia:

Siglas e Textos:

Beowulf = *Epic and Saga. Beowulf, The Song of Roland, The Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel, The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs* (Ch. W. Elliot et al., Eds., 1910). Vol. 49. New York: P. F. Collier & Son Corporation (pp. 5-95); *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (R. K. Gordon, Ed., 1957). London: J. M. Dent & Sons LTD (pp. 1-63); *Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment* (J. R. C. Hall, Ed., 1967/1911). London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. (pp. 20-177); *Beowulf* (C. L. Wrenn, Ed., 1953). London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.

Beowulf DL = *Beowulf* (D. Duțescu & L. Levițchi, Trans., 1969). București: Editura pentru literatură universală.

Béroutl = Béroutl (2014a). *Romanul despre Tristan* [The Romance of Tristan] (C. Dinescu, Ed. bilingue, pp. 27-222, coluna eschuerda). Iași: Polirom; *Tristan et Iseut, Les poèmes français, La saga norroise* (Lacroix, D. & Walter, P., Eds., 2010, pp. 21-231). Paris: Librairie Générale Française; Béroutl (1913). *Le Roman de Tristan: Poème du XII^e siècle*. (E. Muret, Ed., pp. 1-137). Paris: Honoré Champion.

Béroutl D = Béroutl (2014b). *Romanul despre Tristan* [The Romance of Tristan]. (C. Dinescu, Ed. Bilingue, pp. 27-222, coluna dreapta). Iași: Polirom.

Căutarea = În căutarea Sfântului Graal [In search of Holy Grail] (S. Ailenii, Trad., 2015). Tălmăcirii medievale occidentale în limba română: A Demanda do Santo Graal [Western Medieval translations in Romanian: The quest for the Holy Grail]. *Analele Științifice ale Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iași, secțiunea III e, Lingvistică*, LXI, 15-31.

Cid = *Cantar de Mio Cid* [The lay of the Cid]. (1956). *Obras de R. Menéndez Pidal* [Works of R. Menéndez Pidal] (vol. V), *Cantar de Mío Cid* [The song of my Cid] (vol. III), *Texto del cantar y Adiciones* [Text of the Song and Additions] (3^a ed.) (R. Menéndez Pidal, Ed., pp. 909-1164), Madrid: Espasa – Calpe, S. A.. Disponível, 19 de setembro de 2023, em <https://archive.org/details/cantardemiocid0003unse/page/n5/mode/2up>; Pidal, R. M. (1955). *Poema de Mío Cid: Le poème de mon Cid* (R. Menéndez Pidal, Ed., & E. Kohler, Trad.). Paris: C. Klincksieck; *Cantar de Mio Cid. Obras de R. Menéndez Pidal* (t. V), *Cantar de Mío Cid* (1946, R. Menéndez Pidal, Ed., vol. III), *Texto del cantar y Adiciones*. Madrid: Espasa – Calpe, S. A..

Cid B = *Cîntecul Cidului* [The lay of the Cid] (1978, V. Bercescu, Trad.). *Poeme epice ale evului mediu* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages] (S. Bercescu & V. Bercescu & S. Răducanu, Trans., pp. 143-201). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.

Cid T = *Cîntarea Cidului* [The lay of the Cid] (1979, E. Tănase, Trad.). București: Univers.

Demanda = *Demanda do Santo Graal* [The quest of the Holy Grail] (2005, I. Freire Nunes, Ed.). Lisboa: Casa da Moeda.

Folie Tristan = Bédier, J. (1907). *Les deux poèmes de La Folie Tristan* [The two poems of Folie Tristan] (J. Bédier, Ed.). Paris: Firmin – Didot et C^{ie}.

Lancelot = Chrétien de, T. (1899). *Der Karrenritter (Lancelot) und Das Wilhelmsleben (Guillaume d'Angleterre)* [The knight of the Cart (Lancelot) and Wilhelm's life (Guillaume d'Angleterre)] (Wendelin Foerster, Herausg., pp. 1-254). Halle: Max Niemeyer.

Lancelot S = Chrétien de, T. (1973). *Cavalerul Lancelot* [The knight Lancelot] (M. Stănescu, Trad.). București: Albatros.

LM = *Livro de Tristan e Livro de Merlin* [The Romance of Tristan and The Romance of Merlin] (2001a, P. Lorenzo Gradín, J. A. Souto Cabo et al., Eds., pp. 151-172). Santiago de Compostela: Centro de Ramón Piñeiro para a Investigación en Humanidades.

LT = *Livro de Tristan e Livro de Merlin* [The Romance of Tristan and The Romance of Merlin] (2001b, P. Lorenzo Gradín, J. A. Souto Cabo et al., Eds., pp. 73-103) Santiago de Compostela: Centro de Ramón Piñeiro para a Investigación en Humanidades.

Ms. 99 BNF = ms. fr. 99: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Ms. 750 BNF = ms. fr. 750: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Ms. 756 BNF = ms. fr. 756: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Nibelungenlied Ba = *Das Nibelungenlied* [The song of the Nibelungs] (1886, K. Bartsch, Herausg.). Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus. Disponível, 20 de setembro de 2023, em <https://ia800708.us.archive.org/30/items/dasnibelungenli05bartgoog/dasnibelungenli05bartgoog.pdf>

Nibelungenlied Si = *Das Nibelungenlied* [The song of the Nibelungs] (1914/1868, 1898, K. J. Simrock, Herausg.). Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek. Disponível, 21 de setembro de 2023, em <https://archive.org/details/dasnibelungenli00simr/page/32/mode/2up> e em <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/simrock/nibelun1/chap022.html>

Nibelungi P = *Cîntecul Nibelungilor* [The song of the Nibelungs] (1971, C. Paradais, Trad.). Iași: Junimea.

Nibelungi T = *Cîntecul Nibelungilor* [The song of the Nibelungs] (1964, V. Tempeanu, Trad.). București: Editura pentru literatură universală.

Parsifal = Wolfram von, E. (1978). *Parsifal* (S. Răducanu, Trad.). *Poeme epice ale evului mediu* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages]. (S. Bercescu, V. Bercescu & S. Răducanu, Trads., pp. 220-337). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.

Parzival = Wolfram von, E. (1891). *Parzival* (K. Lachmann, Herausg.). Disponível, 28 de junho de 2023, em <https://archive.org/details/wolfram-von-eschenbach-parzival-mittelhochdeutsch-lachmann-1891-20230314/page/n3/mode/2up>; Wolfram von, E. (2006). *Parzival* (K. Lachmann, Herausg.). Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag. Disponível, 28 de junho de 2023, em https://archive.org/details/parzival0000wolf_o9m7/page/194/mode/2up

Perceval = Chrétien de, T. (1979). *Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes: Le Conte du Graal (Perceval)* [Chrétien de Troyes'Perceval – The Story of the Grail] (vol. I-II, F. Lecoy, Ed.). Paris: Honoré Champion; Troyes, Chrétien de (1994), *Oeuvres complètes* [Complete works] (D. Poirion, D'Anne Berthelot, P. F. Dembowski, S. Lefèvre, K. D. Uitti, & Ph. Walter, Eds., pp. 1299-1391). Paris: Gallimard.

- Perceval P* = Chrétien de, T. (2016). *Cavalerul Perceval: Povestea Graalului* [Perceval: The story of the Grail] (M. Pavel, Trad.). Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg.
- Po* = *L'Estoire del Saint Graal* [The history of the Holy Grail] (1997, 2 vols. J.-P. Ponceau, Ed.). Paris: Honoré Champion.
- Roland* = *La Chanson de Roland* [The lay of Roland] (1922 & Ed. 1931, J. Bédier, Ed.). Paris: H. Piazza. Disponível, 20 de setembro de 2023, em <https://archive.org/details/lachansonderolan00bduoft/page/62/mode/2up>
- Roland B* = *Cîntecul lui Roland* [The lay of Roland]. (1978). *Poeme epice ale evului mediu* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages] (S. Bercescu, V. Bercescu, & S. Răducanu, Trans., pp. 15-88). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.
- Roland Ta* = *Cîntarea lui Roland: Poem epic vechiu francez* [The lay of Roland: Old French epic poem] (1941, E. Tănase, Trad.). Cluj: Tipografia Cartea Românească.
- Roland Tb* = *La Chanson de Roland: Cîntarea lui Roland* [The lay of Roland: The lay of Roland] (1974, E. Tănase, Ed. e Trad.). București: Univers.
- Romane G* = *Copilăria lui Lancelot și Lancelot îndrăgostit* [The childhood of Lancelot and Lancelot in love]. (2019, D. Gradu, Trad.). Iași: Cartea Românească Educațional.
- Romane T* = *Romanele Mesei rotunde* [The Romance of the Round Table] (1976, A. Tita, Trad.). București: Univers.
- Romans* = Boulanger, J. (Ed.). (1922-1923). *Les Romans de la Table Ronde* [The Romances of the Round Table]. *L'Histoire de Merlin l'Enchanteur: Les Enfances de Lancelot* [The history of Merlin the enchanter: The childhood of Lancelot] (vol. I), *Les amours de Lancelot du Lac: Galehaut, sire des îles lointaines* [The love stories of Lancelot of the Lake: Galehaut, Lord of the Distant Isles] (vol. II), *Le Chevalier à la charrette: Le Château aventureux* [The knight of the cart: The adventurous castle] (vol. III), *Le Saint Graal. La Mort d'Artus* [The Holy Grail: The death of Arthur] (vol. IV). Paris: Plon. Disponível, 19 de setembro de 2023, <https://archive.org> ;
https://www.ebooksgratuits.com/pdf/boulenger_legende_du_roi_arthur_2.pdf
- RTa* = *Le Roman de Tristan en prose: Des aventures de Lancelot à la fin de la Folie de Tristan* [The prose Romance of Tristan: From the adventures of Lancelot to the end of Tristan's madness] (1987, vol. I, P. Ménard, Ed.). Genève: Droz.
- RTb* = *Le Roman de Tristan en prose* [The prose Romance of Tristan] (1963-1985, 3 vols., R. L. Curtis, Ed.). Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.
- SMA* = Soberanas, A.-J. (1979). La version galaïco-portugaise de la Suite du Merlin [The Galician-Portuguese version of the Suite du Merlin]. *Vox Romanica*, XXXVIII, 174-193.
- SMB* = *La Suite du Roman de Merlin* [The suite of the Roman de Merlin] (1996, 2 vols., G. Roussineau, Ed.). Genève: Droz.
- So* = *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, Lestoire del Saint Graal* (1909, vol. I, H. O. Sommer, Ed.). Washington: The Carnegie Institution of Washington.

ST = Ailenii, S. (2019). *A tradução galego-portuguesa do romance arturiano: Os primeiros testemunhos* [The Galician-Portuguese Translation of the Arthurian Romance: The First Testimonies] (pp. 375-419). Porto: Estratégias Criativas.

Tristan Nebun = Tristan Nebun [Mad Tristan] (1978, S. Bercescu, & V. Bercescu, Trads.). *Poeme epice ale evului mediu* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages] (S. Bercescu, V. Bercescu, & S. Răducanu, Trads., pp. 101-130). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică (pp. 101-130).

Tristan et Iseut = *Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut* [The Romance of Tristan and Iseut] (1918, J. Bédier, Ed.). Paris: H. Piazza et C^{ie}.

Tristan și Iseut = Romanul lui Tristan și Iseut [The Romance of Tristan and Iseut] (1970, A. Rally, Trad.). *Tristan și Iseut: Abatele Prévost – Manon Lescaut: Bernardin de Saint-Pierre – Paul și Virginia* [Tristan and Iseut. Abbé Prévost – Manon Lescaut: Bernardin de Saint-Pierre – Paul and Virginia] (A. Rally, A. Gabrielescu, & V. Ursu, Trads., pp. 7-133). București: Eminescu (pp. 7-133).

TT = *Estória do Santo Graal: Livro Português de José de Arimateia* [Story of the Holy Grail. The Portuguese Book of Joseph of Arimathea] (2016, J. C. R. Miranda et al., Eds.). Porto: Estratégias Criativas; Carter, H. H. (1967). *The Portuguese book of Joseph of Arimathea* (H. H. Carter, Ed.). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Yvain = Chrétien de, T. (1887). *Der Löwenritter (Yvain)* [The knight with the lion (Yvain)] (W. Foerster, Herausg., pp. 1-272). Halle: Max Niemeyer.

Yvain S = Chrétien de, T. (1977). *Yvain: Cavalerul cu Leul* [Yvain: The knight with the lion] (M. Stănescu, Trad.). București: Albatros.

Estudos:

Ailenii, S. (2015). Tălmăcirii medievale occidentale în limba română: A Demanda do Santo Graal [Western Medieval translations in Romanian: The quest for the Holy Grail]. *Analele științifice ale Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iași, secțiunea III e, Lingvistică, LXI*, 11-31.

Ailenii, S. (2019). *A tradução galego-portuguesa do romance arturiano: Os primeiros testemunhos* [The Galician-Portuguese translation of the Arthurian romance: The first testimonies]. Porto: Estratégias Criativas.

Bădescu, I. (1976). Cuvânt înainte [Foreword]. *Romanele mesei rotunde* [The Romance of the Round Table] (A. Tita, Trad., pp. IX-XVI). București: Univers.

Bercescu, S., & Bercescu, V. (1978). Studiu introductiv [Introductory study]. *Poeme epice ale evului mediu* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages] (S. Bercescu, V. Bercescu & S. Răducanu, Trads., pp. 7-18; 91-99). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.

Bercescu, V. (1978). Studiu introductiv [Introductory study]. Em *Poeme epice ale evului mediu* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages]. (S. Bercescu, V. Bercescu, & S. Răducanu, Trads., pp. 133-142). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.

Calvário Correia, I. S. (2015). *Do Lancelot ao Lançarote de Lago* [From Lancelot to Lançarote of the Lake]. Porto: Estratégias Criativas.

- Dias, A. F. (2003-2006). A matéria da Bretanha em Portugal: Relevância de um fragmento pergamináceo [The matter of Britain in Portugal: Relevance of a parchment fragment]. *Revista Portuguesa de Filologia: Miscelânea de Estudos in Memoriam José G. Herculano de Carvalho* [Portuguese philology review: Miscellaneous studies in memoriam José G. Herculano de Carvalho], XXV(I), 145-221.
- Dinescu, C. (2014). Cuvânt înainte [Foreword]. *Romanul despre Tristan* [The Romance of Tristan] (C. Dinescu, Trad., pp. 5-24). Iași: Polirom.
- Dumitrescu Bușulenga, Z. (1964). Cîntecul Nibelungilor [The song of the Nibelungs]. *Cîntecul Nibelungilor* [The Song of the Nibelungs] (V. Tempeanu, Trad., pp. 5-11). București: Editura pentru literatură universală (pp. 5-11).
- Duțescu, D., & Levițchi, L. (1969). Notă asupra ediției [Note on the edition]. *Beowulf* (D Duțescu e L. Levițchi, Trads.). București: Editura pentru literatură universală.
- Gradu, D. (2019). Cuvînt de întâmpinare [Welcoming words]. *Copilăria lui Lancelot și Lancelot îndrăgostit* [The childhood of Lancelot and Lancelot in love] (D. Gradu, Trad., pp. 5-8). Iași: Cartea Românească Educațional.
- Grigoriu, B. (2019). La Chanson de Roland sous la dictature: L'Épopée roumaine d'une translatio [La Chanson de Roland under the dictatorship: The Romanian epic of a translatio]. *ANASTASIS: Research in Medieval Culture and Art*, VI(1), 211-251. Disponibil, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://anastasis-review.ro/wp-content/uploads/ARMCA-2019-VI-1.pdf>
- Laranjinha, A. S. (2010). *Artur, Tristão e o Graal* [Arthur, Tristão and the Grail]. Porto: Estratégias Criativas.
- Miranda, J. C. (1998). *A demanda do Santo Graal e o ciclo Arturiano da Vulgata* [The quest for the Holy Grail and the Arthurian cycle of the Vulgate]. Porto: Granito.
- Miranda, J. C. (2016). Um romance medieval copiado no século XVI [A Medieval Romance copied in the 16th century]. Em J. C. Miranda et al. (Eds.), *Estória do Santo Graal: Livro Português de José de Arimateia* [The story of the Holy Grail: Portuguese book of Joseph of Arimathea] (pp. IX-XXIII). Porto: Estratégias Criativas.
- Paradais, C. (1971). Cuvînt înainte [Foreword]. *Cîntecul Nibelungilor* [The song of the Nibelungs] (C. Paradais, Trad.). Iași: Junimea.
- Pavel, M. (2016). Ultima carte a lui Chrétien de Troyes [The last book of Chrétien de Troyes]. Em Chrétien de Troyes, *Cavalerul Perceval: Povestea Graalului* [The knight Perceval: The story of the Grail] (M. Pavel, Trad., pp. 7-18). Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg.
- Pichel, R., & Varela Barreiro, X. (2017). O fragmento galego-português do Livro de Tristam: Nova proposta cronológica e diatópica. [The Galician-Portuguese fragment of the Book of Tristam: New chronological and diatopic proposal]. Em *Madrygal. Revista de Estudios Gallegos*, 20, 159-214.
- Poirion, D. (1994). Note sur la présente édition [Note on the present edition]. Em Chrétien de Troyes, *Oeuvres complètes* [Complete works] (D. Poirion, D'Anne Berthelot, P. F. Dembowski, S. Lefèvre, K. D. Uitti & P. Walter, Eds., pp. LI-LIX). Paris: Gallimard.

- Răducanu, S. (1978). Studiu introductiv [Introductory study]. *Poeme epice ale evului mediu: Cîntecul lui Roland, Tristan, Cîntecul Cidului, Parsifal* [Epic poems of the Middle Ages: The song of Roland, Tristan, The song of the Cid, Parsifal] (S. Bercescu, V. Bercescu & S. Răducanu, Trads., pp. 205-219). București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.
- Stănescu, M. (1973). Nota traducătorului [Translator's note]. Em Chrétien de Troyes, *Cavalerul Lancelot* [The knight Lancelot] (M. Stănescu, Trad., pp. 180-181). București: Albatros.
- Stănescu, M. (1977). Nota traducătorului [Translator's note]. Em Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain: Cavalerul cu Leul* [Yvain: The knight with the lion] (M. Stănescu, Trad.). București: Albatros.
- Tănase, E. (1941). Note de traducere [Translation notes]. *Cîntarea lui Roland: Poem Epic Vechiu Francez* [The song of Roland: Old French epic poem] (E. Tănase, Trad., pp. 105-135). Cluj: Tipografia Cartea Românească.
- Tănase, E. (1974). Prefață [Preface]. *La Chanson de Roland: Cîntarea lui Roland* [The lay of Roland: The lay of Roland] (E. Tănase, Ed./Trad., pp. 5-11). București: Univers.
- Walter, P. (1989). Préface [Preface]. *Tristan et Iseut: Les Poèmes Français: La Saga Norroise* [Tristan and Iseut: The French poems: The Norse saga] (D. Lacroix & P. Walter, Eds., pp. 7-20). Paris: Librairie Générale Française.

Dicionários :

- CNRTL = Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales [National center for textual and lexical resources]. (2012). Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://www.cnrtl.fr/portail/>
- DA/DLR = Academia Română. (1913-1949): *Dicționarul limbii române* [Dictionary of the Romanian language]. Edição digital em CLRE: *Corpus lexicografic românesc electronic*. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://dlr1.solirom.ro/>
- DDGM = Seoane, E. G., Álvarez de la Granja, M., Boullón Agrelo, A I., Rodríguez Suárez, M., & Suárez Vázquez, D. (2006-2012). *Dicionario de dicionarios do galego medieval – Corpus lexicográfico medieval da lingua galega* [Dictionary of dictionaries of Medieval Galician – Lexicographic corpus of the Galician language]. Seminario de Lingüística Informática – Grupo TALG/Instituto da Lingua Galega. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em https://ilg.usc.gal/ddgm/ddd_pesquisa.php?pesquisa=peca&tipo_busca=lema
- DELP = Nascentes, A. (1966). *Dicionário etimológico resumido* [Concise etymological dictionary]. Instituto Nacional do Livro. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://archive.org/details/DICIONARIOETIMOLOGICORESUMIDODALINGUAPORTUGUESAANTENORNASCENTES/page/n1/mode/2up?view=theater>
- DELR = Ciorănescu, A. (2002). *Dicționarul etimologic al limbii române* [Etymological dictionary of the Romanian language] (T. Șandru-Mehedinți, & M. Popescu Marin, Trad.). București: Saeculum I. O. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <https://dexonline.ro/sursa/der>
- DEX = *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* [Explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language]. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <https://dexonline.ro/>
- DG = Godefroy, F. (1881-1902). *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle* [Dictionary of Old French and all its dialects from the 9th to the 15th

- century]. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <http://micmap.org/dicfro/search/dictionnaire-godefroy/>%20>
- DLE* = Academia Española. *Diccionario de la lengua española* [Dictionary of the Spanish language]. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://dle.rae.es/>
- DLP* = Academia das Ciências de Lisboa. *Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa* [Dictionary of the Portuguese language]. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://dicionario.acad-ciencias.pt/>
- DLR* = Academia Română (1965-2010). *Dicționarul limbii române* [Dictionary of the Romanian language]. Edição digital anastática em *Corpus lexicografic românesc electronic*. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://dlr1.solirom.ro/>
- DLRLC* = *Dicționarul limbii române literare contemporane* [Dictionary of contemporary Romanian literary language] (D. Macrea & E. Petrovici, Coords.). București: Academia Română. Disponível, 30 de abril de 2023, em <https://dexonline.ro/sursa/dlrlc>
- DPLP* = *Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa* [Priberam dictionary of the Portuguese language]. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <https://dicionario.priberam.org/>
- LG* = Godefroy, F. (1990). *Lexique de l'ancien français* [Lexicon of Old French] (J. Bonnard & Am. Salmon, Eds.). Paris: Honoré Champion. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <http://micmap.org/dicfro/search/lexique-godefroy/piece>
- LLF* = *La langue française* [The French language]. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <https://www.lalanguefrancaise.com/dictionnaire/definition/almacor#0>
- Scriban* = Scriban, A. (2016). *Dicționarul limbii române: Etimologii, înțelesuri, exemple, citate, arhaisme, neologisme, provincialisme* [Dictionary of the Romanian language: Etymologies, meanings, examples, quotes, archaisms, neologisms, provincialisms] (D. Corbu, Ed.). Iași: Princeps Multimedia. Disponível, 6 de abril de 2023, em <https://dexonline.ro/sursa/der>
- TEF* = *Trésor de la langue française* [Treasury of the French language]. Disponível, 24 de setembro de 2023, em <https://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/>

**« RENOUVELONS L'HOMME INTÉRIEUR ».
UN MODÈLE DE POLITIQUE SOCIALE ET CULTURELLE :
L'HUMANISME HÉSYCHASTE¹**

**“LET US RENEW THE INNER MAN”.
A MODEL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL POLICY:
HESYCHAST HUMANISM**

Laura LAZĂR ZĂVĂLEANU

Université Babeş-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca, Roumanie
Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania

e-mail: minodora.zavaleanu@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract

This article is part of a cycle of three articles² dedicated to Neagoe Basarab and his cultural contribution in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Romanian Renaissance and Humanism, a mutation carried out under the auspices of Hesychasm. Focusing on the Romanian prince's parenetic book, it comes in the continuation of the study “De l'Hésychasme Politique et Militant à la Renaissance”, published in “Annales Universitatis Apulensis: Seria Historica”, vol.28/2025, which analyzes Neagoe's activity as a patron and political and cultural founder and will in turn be continued by a third study dedicated to the iconography of the voivode, all of which aims to uncover the relationships between small history and big History, tradition and innovation, new sensitivity and the universe of emotions of the period.

Using the tools of cultural studies, the history of sensibilities and emotions, and the hermeneutics of literary texts and sacred images, this study identifies in “The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his Son Theodosie” the inaugural manifestations of Romanian Humanism which came in the wake of hesychast Byzantine Humanism. In contrast to Western Humanism, in the doctrine of Romanian Humanism whose hesychast ideal is improving and healing the fallen human temporality through divine eternity, man must neither oppose Christianity nor dethrone God in order to (re)become the centre of the world.

Through the examples in his parenetic work, Neagoe Basarab proposes a kalokagathic model of individual life extended, first to an entire community of spirit (an “emotional community” according to Barbara Rosenwein), then to the entire people, and even more so, as an ideal spiritual and cultural policy, to the entire country. This gives the measure of what can be called the political hesychasm of the Wallachian voivode who very consciously assumed the role of king-priest and basileus builder/creator and patron whose mission was to preserve and extend Byzantine values in their most condensed and systematised doctrinaire expression in the hesychasm of the 14th century.

Before the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the latter had shaped and strengthened the Church and a model of spiritual and cultural policy to be perpetuated, in which man, aiming to restore his link with

¹ Article History: Received: 03.04.2025. Accepted: 03.04.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

² The idea for this series of articles initially arose from the conclusions of a paper presented at the International Colloque *Intérieur / extérieur. Dialectique et représentations en dynamique (Italie, XIIIe-XVe siècle)*, organised on 9-10 June 2023 at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, by my colleagues Laurent Baggioni and Patrizia Gasparini, whom I would like to thank.

God, reorganised his life and his earthly city in the mirror of the divine one, harmonising everything in a kind of ideal "divine humanism" (Gelian M. Prokhorov) which is the expression of East European humanism in the post-Byzantine space.

Keywords: Romanian Humanism; Byzantine and post-Byzantine hesychast Humanism; "divine humanism"; political Hesychasm; new sensibility; Ladder of Virtues/ Ladder of Emotions.

Ce qui consacre le basileus valaque à l'aube de l'histoire et dans la mémoire de la littérature et de la culture roumaines c'est son œuvre parénétique *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către Fiul său, Theodosie* [Les Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab à son fils Théodose], testament moral et éducatif, écrit le plus probablement vers la fin de sa vie et conçu pour l'édification de Théodose, son successeur au trône. Corrélaté, dans la littérature byzantine, à l'*Art de régner* que Basile Ier le Macédonien adressera à son fils Léon VI et au *De Administrando Imperio* de Constantin Porphyrogénète et, dans la littérature slave, à l'*Instruction (Poutchenie)* que le grand-prince de Kiev Vladimir Monomaque dédie à ses fils, le livre du prince roumain est souvent aussi comparé au *Prince* de Niccolo Machiavel (1513-1516) et à l'*Istitutio Principis Christiani* d'Érasme de Rotterdam (1517), tous deux écrits à peu près à la même époque. La question principale est d'origine hésychaste – la vie comme don sacré et voie vers l'amélioration de soi pour restaurer la création humaine d'avant la déchéance du péché originel, une vie pendant laquelle l'individu doit savoir choisir entre l'essence et l'apparence, en optant pour des modèles humains exemplaires, mais ayant toujours comme idéal le modèle divin absolu (*la déification/ îndumnezeirea*).

Les sources de l'ouvrage peuvent être identifiées dans le texte biblique (*Livres I-II de Samuel, Livres des Rois, Second Livre des Chroniques*) ou dans les écrits mystico-ascétiques (certains d'influence hésychaste) tels que les *Chapitres pratiques et théologiques* de Siméon le Nouveau Théologien, l'*Échelle des Vertus* de Jean Climaque, la *Dioptra* de Philippe le Solitaire, les *Homélies* de Jean Chrysostome, les *Discours* d'Éphrem le Syriaque, les *Paroles* d'Athanase d'Alexandrie. À ceux-ci s'ajoutent les éléments extraits des livres populaires (la source égyptienne *Le Physiologos* dans laquelle les animaux sont présentés comme des allégories des vertus humaines, *Le Roman d'Alexandre le Grand, Le Livre de Barlaam et de Joasaph* et différents textes hagiographiques). Le mode de communication c'est l'adresse directe « à son fils aimé » et le dialogue, soutenu et interpellant son lecteur pour faciliter la transmission de la sagesse, est établi sur la base des nombreuses références de la bibliothèque du *domn* érudit, parmi lesquelles les plus importantes renvoient à la doctrine hésychaste, dont Neagoe est l'un des fidèles.

Disciple de Niphon II, le patriarche de Constantinople canonisé quelques années après sa mort pour ses foi et componction³ exemplaires qui venaient aussi de sa discipline hésychaste, Neagoe a fait son apprentissage au monastère de Bistrița, centre spirituel empreint de l'esprit

³ « Les moines se vivent comme des athlètes de haut niveau en matière d'émotion », affirme Damien Boquet dans son étude qui liste certaines émotions de la « sensibilité chrétienne » qui sont aussi des émotions cultivées par les hésychastes (Boquet, 2022, p. 49). D'ailleurs, d'après le modèle de Jean Climaque, on trouve dans les *Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab...* plusieurs véritables échelles des vertus qui deviennent, souvent, des mini *bréviaires d'émotions et de sentiments*, comme, par exemple, ce magnifique crescendo de sensibilité énumérant les marches à monter pour *se purifier et restaurer la perfection initiale (desăvârșirea)* de l'homme afin que celui-ci reprenne sa place à côté de Dieu, à commencer par la vertu du *silence*, la valeur primordiale de la pratique hésychaste : „Că mai întâi de toate iaste tăcerea. Deci tăcerea face oprirea, oprirea face umilinta și plângerea, iar plângerea face frică, și frica face smerenie. Smerenia face socoteală de cele ce vor să fie, iar acea socoteală face dragoste, și dragostea face sufletele să vorbească cu îngerii. Atuncea va pricepe omul că nu iaste departe de Dumnezeu”. « Car avant tout est le silence. car le silence fait l'arrêt, l'arrêt engendre humilité et lamentations, et les lamentations engendrent la peur, et la peur la componction. La componction fait réfléchir à ce qui adviendra, et cette réflexion fait naître l'amour, et l'amour fait parler les âmes avec les anges. Alors l'homme saura qu'il n'est pas loin de Dieu... ». (*Enseignements...*, 1971, p. 226).

de la même doctrine et pourvu d'une bibliothèque contenant les écritures des plus importants représentants du courant. Il sera initié tôt aux principes de l'hésychasme et leur restera tellement fidèle toute sa vie que, dans son livre adressé à son fils, *il tentera même d'en proposer une politique idéale, sociale et culturelle pour tout son pays*, ou, au moins, pour les représentants de la cour et ceux de l'Église, les élites qui pourraient lire son ouvrage, même si, au niveau absolu⁴ il vise et s'adresse à tout le peuple, en faisant bien attention de le préciser⁵.

C'est justement ici qu'on peut parler d'*hésychasme politique*⁶, ou, plus précisément et plus correctement, de la *politique de ce courant initialement monacal devenu l'hésychasme militant*, luttant et théorisant les voies par lesquelles l'homme regagne sa place de création parfaite, de fils de Dieu et d'empereur responsable de ce monde lui ayant été accordé en don au moment de la création et dont il restaure le lien avec Dieu, cassé au moment du péché des protoparents Adam et Eve. C'est, d'ailleurs, le sens fondamentalement civilisateur de cette politique spirituelle et culturelle qui ainsi propulsera *l'humanisme byzantin* et ses manifestations dans l'espace post-byzantin, et notamment la Valachie de Neagoe Basarab ou la Moldavie d'Étienne le Grand ou de Pierre Rareș.

Courant orthodoxe contemplatif traditionnel, l'hésychasme, fondé sur la tradition ascétique, puise ses premières formes dans l'apparition du monachisme égyptien au IV^{ème} siècle (quand Macaire l'Égyptien parle déjà de « la prière incessante » et que le terme *hesychia* est déjà utilisé par Jean Chrysostome). On en note aussi des manifestations au V^{ème} et au VI^{ème} siècles⁷, mais sa doctrine ne sera accomplie théoriquement, reconnue et promue officiellement dans l'Empire byzantin qu'au XIV^{ème} siècle. C'est, plus précisément, en 1351, au Concile de Constantinople (sur une polémique qui durait déjà d'avant 1341) que l'Empereur Jean VI Cantacuzène décidera en faveur de Grégoire Palamas et de sa doctrine *militante* hésychaste pour trancher la grande dispute dogmatique entre les deux opposants, Barlaam le Calabrais et Grégoire Palamas, qui avait enflammé le monde orthodoxe oriental et occidental et qui avait impliqué les grands noms de la vie religieuse et intellectuelle de l'époque.

Parmi les éléments de doctrine les plus intéressants pour notre analyse, nous noterons la vocation de l'hésychasme à la *médiation culturelle* (Manolescu, 2003, p. 16), la *primauté de la sainte Tradition* et de sa liaison continue au présent immédiat par les modèles essentiels et d'ici, en conséquence, la *primauté de la lecture* des textes sacrés et patristiques et de *l'édification spirituelle* à travers les livres. D'où, encore, l'importance fondamentale de la *relation magister - disciple*, au milieu de laquelle se fait en premier lieu, par le modèle immédiat, la transmission d'une *praxis* de la prière continue et d'une discipline engagée, et

⁴ Dans *L'Utopie d'un Prince. Les Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab et la légitimation du pouvoir politique à travers la tradition* (article en cours de publication), Marian Neamțiu développe l'idée du modèle de la *cité idéale utopique* que Neagoe propose dans ses *Enseignements*...

⁵ Pour préciser les destinataires de son traité didactique et théologique, dans les *Enseignements*..., Neagoe Basarab construit une image complète de la hiérarchie sociale, en faisant bien attention d'y intégrer aussi les classes des gens simples libres : « Et tous ceux que les rois et les seigneurs désignent comme vainqueurs de leur victoire, qu'ils soient commerçants, laboureurs, riches, pauvres, tous ceux qui s'appellent maîtres dans leurs maisons »/ „Și câți suntu puși de împărați și de domni să fie biruitori pre suptu biruința lor, măcar de ar fi neguțători, măcar plugari, măcar bogați, măcar săraci, toți să cheamă stăpâni caselor lor”, (*Enseignements*..., 1971, p. 230).

⁶ Pour l'idée d'*hésychasme politique*, voir Prokhorov, 1979, pp. 25-63, qui analyse le rôle de l'hésychasme au travers d'une perspective culturelle, comme mouvement de pensée qui, partant de son idéal de paix intérieure, ouvrira la voie à une pacification politique externe aussi et donnera naissance à des réformes sociales et culturelles importantes. Notons, de plus, le commentaire du *Liminaire* du même numéro de revue se concentrant sur « ce thème d'une spiritualité créatrice capable d'éclairer et d'approfondir toutes les recherches de l'humain dans un humanisme transfiguré, un divino-humanisme ».

Voir aussi Mureșan, 2012, pp. 295-296, qui considère le concept oxymoronique et « peu claire la manière dont une doctrine politique pourrait dériver d'un mode de vie monacal solitaire, contemplatif » et propose à la place le concept de *Photianisme politique* et Petre Guran, 2021, pp. 169-171, qui, à son tour, propose un autre concept, celui d'*Hésychasme eschatologique*, autour duquel il développe la deuxième section du livre qui porte ce titre même. Je remercie Petre Guran pour ses suggestions bibliographiques. Voir aussi Lazăr Zăvăleanu, 2025.

⁷ Cf., parmi d'autres, Scrima, 2000, pp.177-181, Mazilu, 1994, pp. 42-53, Meyendorff, 2018, Behr-Sigel, 2023, pp. 59-137.

seulement en second lieu, celle d'une *théoria* (Mazilu, 1994, pp. 53-54). En même temps, nous distinguerons aussi *l'importance de l'individu unique* en soi et non pas seulement maillon d'une communauté, la concentration sur soi par la méditation et l'introspection dans une *pratique du silence et de la paix* extérieure pour acquérir la paix intérieure, *la prière continue comme état de conscience agrandi*, l'idée de *la valeur de l'Homme comme création parfaite* qui, par amélioration, peut retrouver Dieu et l'état parfait d'avant la chute, l'importance du rapport *corps-intelligence* (gr. *nous*)/ „*minte*” esprit (lat. *mens*)–*cœur* (*psyché*) et la *Prière du cœur comme discipline intérieure ininterrompue* accompagnée d'un exercice de respiration et de conscientisation du corps et de soi-même. On peut y rajouter *la considération absolue du discernement*, mais aussi des *émotions et des sentiments*, la profondeur du *rapport silence – parole* et de celui du *texte oral – texte écrit*, et surtout, le fait que *cette pratique spirituelle n'est pas réservée seulement à la vie ascétique mais qu'elle peut être parfaitement vécue dans le monde laïque*. D'ailleurs, *elle peut y être fortement conseillée comme idéal de vie communautaire*, avec un *modèle absolu d'État conduit par un roi sage, bon croyant, élu de Dieu et exemplaire dans sa foi*, correspondant à la monarchie platonicienne des philosophes et à l'idéal de l'empereur prêtre byzantin. C'est un inventaire essentiel d'éléments qui peuvent être interprétés comme des *prémices fondamentales facilitant le passage vers le nouveau paradigme culturel de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*.

Dans un article sur l'imaginaire religieux dans la littérature roumaine⁸, nous avons identifié deux thèmes fondamentaux : d'une part, *l'idée de la croyance orthodoxe comme forme de légitimation identitaire d'une nation toute entière*, et d'autre part, *l'impératif de continuité et de transmission, la predanie* dont nous avons déjà parlé, terme qui, dans l'espace culturel orthodoxe, signifie la transmission, par écrit ou de vive voix, des vérités révélées de la Sainte Tradition et qu'on utilise en ouvrant le sens sur tout ce qui relève de la tradition spirituelle⁹.

En ce qui concerne le second thème, celui de la *predanie*, de la tradition, du devoir de continuité et de transmission, le texte de référence idéal non seulement dans la littérature roumaine mais probablement dans toute la littérature parénétique du sud-est européen, c'est justement celui des *Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab à son Fils Théodose* où l'on retrouve un répertoire complet de l'imaginaire religieux de l'espace dogmatique chrétien orthodoxe d'orientation hésychaste, greffé, en plus, sur des structures mythico-religieuses d'autres cultures et civilisations, une sorte de *Urtext* idéal dans la littérature roumaine, non seulement pour l'influence exercée dans le temps, mais aussi pour sa valeur de synthèse initiale et originale de l'histoire des idées et des mentalités, ainsi que de la sensibilité et des émotions de la période.

Œuvre parénétique écrite par Neagoe Basarab à la fin de sa vie, testament moral et didactique conçu pour son fils Théodose, adolescent à qui le voïvode-père veut proposer un précipité spirituel qui l'éduque avant qu'il ne lui succède au trône, ce livre du type *miroir des princes*, qui construit le modèle du bon roi chrétien, repose sur l'idée de l'ambivalence du monde et de l'homme, d'où l'importance du juste choix entre l'essence et l'apparence, le matériel et le spirituel, le corps et l'âme, en tant qu'acte fondamental humain.

D'une part, s'étale cette conception qui reflète la structure profondément binaire de l'imaginaire religieux archaïque, soutenue par une construction éthique duale en miroir des hypostases contraires – divin/ diabolique, sacré/ profane, bien/ mal etc., matérialisée par la nécessité de concrétiser des concepts abstraits en vertus ou en vices, avec tout le système symbolique implicite qui suppose un choix ferme pour l'un ou l'autre des termes,

⁸ Cf. Lazăr, 2020, pp. 46-76. Nous reprenons ici pour les développer certaines idées soulevées dans cet article.

⁹ Un repère évangélique qui synthétise l'idée de manière exemplaire est retrouvé dans *L'Épître aux Galates 1 :11-12* – « 11. Je vous déclare, frères, que l'Évangile qui a été annoncé par moi n'est pas de l'homme ; 12. car je ne l'ai ni reçu ni appris d'un homme, mais par une révélation de Jésus Christ » (*La Sainte Bible*, 1880).

conformément à la mentalité du Moyen-Âge. De l'autre, se déploient des contextes qui dépassent déjà cette conception dualiste où le corps serait l'ennemi de l'âme et cette nouvelle vision conçoit l'homme comme une création parfaite qui doit apprendre à accorder les qualités de son âme et de son corps pour récupérer son statut d'avant le péché originel, laquelle relève de l'influence de ce qu'on pourrait appeler l'Humanisme hésychaste.

En reprenant les principes hésychastes, le prince roumain érudit harmonise, avec une étonnante simplicité savante, *l'imaginaire médiéval du théocentrisme avec l'imaginaire anthropocentrique de la Renaissance*, louant la toute-puissance de la raison qui doit être conduite par la foi, l'amour et la prière continue¹⁰ ; il réordonne axiologiquement les valeurs essentielles, plaçant l'« esprit éveillé / mintea trează » au sommet de la hiérarchie et lui conférant le rôle le plus important dans la téléologie chrétienne relative à la rédemption.

Ainsi, dans la vision de Neagoe Basarab, ce ne sont plus *les vertus cardinales chrétiennes (foi, espérance, amour)* qui sauveront au Jugement dernier, mais *mintea* : « *l'esprit* (lat. *mens*) *entier et accompli/ mintea cea întreagă și desăvârșită* » qui est donné par Dieu-même à l'homme « dans ce monde de maintenant »¹¹, « parce que l'esprit est tête et doux enseignement pour toutes les autres vertus [...], fortune et trésor qui ne se dépensent jamais » et l'« *esprit pur/ mintea curată* » qui « s'élève plus haut que les cieux et intercèdera pour les choses justes de l'âme et du corps auprès de l'Empereur tout-puissant¹².

Cette image de l'esprit (de la raison/ de l'intelligence) pur qui devient le représentant de l'âme et du corps au Jugement dernier renvoie, implicitement, au bon choix qui, chez Neagoe, doit être fait – comme pour les hésychastes dont l'idéal est « la descente de la raison dans le cœur » (*coborârea minții în inimă*), non pas par la raison, mais par un « cœur sage », raisonnable (*„inimă înțeleaptă”*). *Le discernement*, dans ce sens, devient la vertu primordiale et impose aussi un *modèle absolu de sagesse – celui de Salomon*¹³, le roi qui est connu non pas seulement par l'épisode biblique du jugement inspiré entre deux mères qui se disputent le même enfant survivant, mais aussi par l'épisode qui le présente en élu de Dieu lequel, pour bénir sa foi sans faille, lui permet de choisir lui-même sa récompense. Pouvant tout recevoir, il ne demande pourtant à Dieu ni richesses, ni vains honneurs, ni encore longue vie, mais « un cœur sage pour la bonne écoute et le juste jugement des gens [...] et de discerner le bien et le mal »¹⁴. Dieu aime son choix et lui répond en lui donnant « un cœur qui discerne et de la sagesse »¹⁵, mais aussi toutes les bontés matérielles qu'il avait eu l'humilité et la mesure de ne pas demander, signe que seul le bon choix – le « bon jugement » – peut être la source du véritable épanouissement, orchestré exclusivement par la puissance divine, en guise de

¹⁰ Voir l'incipit du livre et son analyse dans Lazăr Zăvăleanu, 2025.

¹¹ „Și în viața ceasta de acum vă va fi dat de la dânsul mintea cea întreagă și desăvârșită [n.s.]” (*Les Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab*..., 1971, p. 275).

¹² Pour toutes les trois dernières citations – *Les Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab*..., 1971, p. 338 : „Că mintea iaste cap și învățătură dulce tuturor bunătăților și sfârșitul ei foarte iaste proslăvit. Mintea iaste avuție și comoară netrecătoare, care nu să cheltuiască niciodată. Mintea cea curată să urcă mai pe desupra cerurilor și soléște dreptățile sufletului și ale trupului înaintea atotîitorului împărat”.

¹³ Le modèle de Salomon, repris à des âges différents du roi, revient presque programmatiquement et en leitmotiv dans les *Enseignements*, suggérant ainsi un modèle total puisqu'il ne reste pas seulement avec l'image du jeune roi sage, mais est présenté aussi comme l'exemple du roi qui, en fin de vie, a un moment de perte de sagesse et tombe en péché devant les plaisirs du monde, mais qui sait revenir vers Dieu et faire pénitence pour être pardonné. C'est, de nouveaux, une image humaniste bienveillante du christianisme qui assume l'homme dans toute sa complexité, avec sa grandeur et ses échecs qui peuvent devenir source d'encore plus grande amélioration si l'homme garde sa capacité d'introspection et son regard fixé vers Dieu et la rédemption. Dans Bordreuil, Briquel-Chatonnet, 2018, p.230, les auteurs notent que l'image de Salomon change et s'adapte à des périodes et des espaces différents : « L'image de Salomon s'est ainsi déplacée. Le bon roi qui gouverne selon la justice est devenu un sage, un philosophe à la manière grecque. C'est celui qui connaît les choses de la vie, qui sait en goûter les plaisirs, mais qui reconnaît en même temps leurs limites et leur vanité ».

¹⁴ „inimă înțeleaptă spre ascultarea și judecata [cea] dreaptă a oamenilor tăi, și să pricep binele și răul” (*Les Enseignements*..., 1971, p. 150).

¹⁵ „inimă înțeleghătoare și înțelepciune” (*Les Enseignements*..., 1971, p. 154).

récompense : « Et je te donnerai ce que tu n'as pas demandé : la richesse et la gloire qu'aucun roi n'a eues »¹⁶.

Retenons ici aussi un détail essentiel : le texte de Neagoe ne parle pas d'*esprit* ou d'*intelligence sage* ou *capable de discerner*, ce qui serait naturel pour des attributs qui concernent la raison, mais propose, constamment, les variantes où il remplace la raison/l'*esprit* par le *cœur*. C'est pour cela que Salomon, dans la vision hésychaste de Neagoe, demandera toujours et recevra de Dieu un *cœur* analytique, sage, discernant, compréhensif – *inimă* [et non pas *minte*] *chibzuitoare*, *inimă înțeleaptă*, *inimă pricepătoare*, *inimă înțelegătoare*, en rappelant implicitement les désiderata hésychastes que nous avons déjà invoqués de faire descendre l'*esprit*/ la raison/ l'*intelligence* – rou. *mintea* – dans le *cœur*.

Les Enseignements... organisent les représentations du monde (d'ici et d'au-delà), de l'homme et de ses valeurs en proche relation avec la vision hésychaste : l'espace est figuré verticalement par la relation intrinsèque avec le divin (« *Avant tout, mon fils, il convient de louer Dieu* » postule la phrase d'ouverture du livre) et l'homme est la création parfaite de Dieu, parée de tous les dons divins¹⁷, kalokagathique dans sa conception. Par son origine même, l'homme est beau et bon, et prédisposé à la bonté et à la beauté. Le sens de son existence doit rester en relation directe et absolue avec le divin : la bouche, la langue, les oreilles, les yeux, dit le souverain (vision unificatrice âme-corps d'orientation humaniste), sont tous donnés à l'homme dans un seul but : glorifier, rendre grâce, entendre la parole de Dieu. Le temps privilégié des *Enseignements* est le temps de la prière continue, du chant, de la louange, de l'honneur et de la gloire de Dieu, et de l'action de grâce. C'est la parole qui distingue l'homme des bêtes et prouve sa filiation divine, Dieu étant la Parole. La vie d'ici conditionne la vie d'après, et cette idée, étayée par des arguments hésychastes, est présente dans différents contextes du livre (comme la légende de la Croix, l'honneur des icônes, la hiérarchie des intercesseurs plaçant le culte marial¹⁸ en premier lieu, l'échelle des vertus, la psychostasie, les douanes du ciel¹⁹ etc.)

Le modèle du *bon roi chrétien* avec la variante améliorée de *prince-moine qui vit dans le monde*²⁰ où il devrait devenir le modèle (hésychaste) de vie assumée, en absolu, au niveau sociétal du pays tout entier, place l'*esprit* (au sens d'*intelligence* – rou. *mintea*, gr. *nous*, lat. *mens*) au centre des valeurs comme solution ontologique et le *discernement* comme vertu cardinale. Il s'agit d'une axiologie où apprendre de l'expérience du *magister* – sage dépositaire d'une vérité révélée atemporelle et de ses modèles – à faire le bon choix et à viser la juste mesure et l'analyse (*dreapta socotință*) assurent la continuité et la mémoire sapientielle.

Encore une fois, le rapport *magister* – *disciple*, essentiel pour la pratique spirituelle hésychaste est privilégié et la transmission se fait par la réactualisation de la tradition des Saintes Écritures, des textes patristiques (la Sainte Tradition), ou des textes hagiographiques or sapientiels.

¹⁶ „Și iată că-ți dau încă și ce n-ai cerșut: slavă și bogăție, cât n-au fost la alt împărat” (*Les Enseignements...*, 1971, p. 154).

¹⁷ Pour exprimer l'idée de la perfection d'Adam et Ève et le fait qu'ils ont été couverts de tous les dons divins à la Création, les monastères de Voroneț et de Sucevița peignent, de manière originale, les deux proto-parents vêtus des vêtements impériaux – *strai împărătesc* – avant le péché et nus et déshabillés de ces dons *seulement après* le péché (voir aussi Lazăr Zăvăleanu. 2023, pp. 138-139).

¹⁸ Sur le culte marial chez Neagoe Basarab voir aussi Păun, 2001, pp. 186-223.

¹⁹ Voir Guran, 2021, pp. 160-231, le chapitre *Hésychasme eschatologique*, pour une analyse de la rencontre de la contemplation mystique hésychaste « avec la politique dans un espace que les Byzantins reconnaissent comme la clé de voûte de leur construction politique, leurs croyances sur la fin des temps » et les implications eschatologiques de la conception hésychaste qui deviennent intéressantes pour nous inclusivement afin d'interpréter la place importante que les thèmes corrélatifs au Jugement dernier commencent à avoir dans l'iconographie roumaine, tout comme dans la littérature.

²⁰ Voir Guran, 2021, pp. 450-458 sur la réalité politique de la figure du *prince moine* qui incarne « la fuite du monde à l'intérieur du monde », particulièrement répandue à Byzance au XIII^e et XIV^e siècle, et sa rhétorique plus au moins explicite. Aussi pour son pendant – le *moine blanc*.

Il est très cohérent donc d'avoir une thèse qui, tirée des *Proverbes de Salomon* – « *Donne une raison au sage, et il deviendra encore plus sage* »²¹ – insiste justement sur l'amélioration continue, dans cet objectif absolu qu'est pour les hésychastes *îndumnezeirea* – la *déification* ici, dans cette vie, comme exercice approchant la rédemption. L'objectif, noté clairement, est individuel et immédiat : l'édification et l'amélioration spirituelle et surtout ce renouvellement spirituel auquel appelle la doctrine hésychaste – « *C'est pourquoi moi aussi j'ai fait l'effort pour l'amour de vos seigneuries, pour que je vous rappelle et que nous nous renouvelions l'homme intérieur* »²². La méthode est celle déjà notée ci-dessus avec insistance : comme dans la plus lointaine Antiquité, c'est la transmission directe du maître à son disciple, *in praesentia, praxis et theoria* confondus – « *Enseigne-le et il te rejoindra dans l'écoute* »²³. En fait, c'est une reprise du modèle du transfert de l'enseignement christique vers les apôtres qui fait écho dans toutes les grandes cultures antiques, qu'il s'agisse du modèle maïeutique des *Dialogues* platoniciens, ou encore des *Upanishad* pour l'étymologie desquelles on propose, parmi diverses interprétations, l'étymologie dérivée du verbe *sad* (*s'asseoir*), indiquant précisément *l'impératif de proximité directe dans l'acte de transmission* de l'enseignement du magister au disciple assis à côté de lui. La condition *sine qua non* du partage avec l'autre, c'est *l'amour*, la loi néotestamentaire idéalement définie dans *1 Corinthiens 13* : « *je vous prie de m'écouter avec amour pour que je puisse aussi vous parler avec amour* »²⁴ et il assure aussi, implicitement, l'objectif général et de perspective – la *continuité* – *predania*, le transfert ininterrompu d'une génération à l'autre des grandes vérités spirituelles révélées.

Ces idées se reflètent également dans l'iconographie voïvodale-religieuse de l'époque. Les portraits de Neagoe Basarab ou des membres de sa famille sont particulièrement éloquents aussi en ce qui concerne la façon dont on habite à l'époque en même temps l'espace sacré et l'espace laïque, dans un jeu de seuils entre l'intérieur et l'extérieur qui parle encore une fois de cet idéal de *déification* (gr. *théosis*, rou. *îndumnezeire*) auquel aspire la doctrine hésychaste et qui suppose la discipline continue de l'amélioration de soi à travers la prière incessante, la contemplation du divin et l'action vertueuse dans l'espoir d'une restauration de l'être humain tel qu'il était avant le péché originel.

Les fresques votives, dont l'un des plus beaux exemples reste toujours celle du *Monastère de Curtea de Argeș*, conservée aujourd'hui au Musée National d'Histoire de Roumanie de Bucarest, sont justement de ces modèles idéaux et ingénieux de représentation de la rencontre entre espaces – sacré et laïque – avec leurs coordonnés – la verticale du rapport avec le divin et l'horizontale du rapport à l'autre près duquel s'accomplit la rédemption – qui organisent la vie des protagonistes de la période. Le scénario iconographique du couple princier de Neagoe Basarab et de son épouse Milita Despina (accompagnés de leurs six enfants, tous couronnés de la couronne des empereurs byzantins et habillés en vêtements de basileus ornés d'or et de pierres précieuses), représenté dans la fresque votive de l'église est éloquent.

²¹ „Dă pricină înțeleptului și mai înțeleptu va fi” (*Les Enseignements...*, 1971, p. 230, pour cette citation et les suivantes).

²² „Dreptu acéia, și eu mă nevoiui iarăși cătră dragostea domniilor voastre, să vă aduc aminte și să ne înnoim omul cel dinnăuntru” (*Les Enseignements...*, 1971, p. 230).

²³ „învață-l și să va alătura să asculte” (*Les Enseignements...*, 1971, p. 230).

²⁴ „vă rog cu dragoste să mă ascultați ca să vă poci spune și eu cu dragoste” (*Les enseignements...*, 1971, p. 217).



Le voïevode Neagoe Basarab, Dame Despina et leurs enfants
Fresque votive du Monastère de Curtea de Argeș, 1512-1517
Musée National d'Histoire de Roumanie, Bucarest, *Photo Marius Amarie*²⁵

²⁵ Je remercie le Musée National d'Histoire de Roumanie, Bucarest, pour la générosité de m'offrir les droits de reproduction et publication de l'image.

Peints dans le narthex, sur la paroi sud, pas loin de l'entrée, dans la zone des sépulcres (donc vouloir assurer, par leur don, non pas seulement le passage entre l'espace profane extérieur et l'espace intérieur sacré, mais aussi – et surtout – entre celui de cette vie éphémère et celui de la vie éternelle d'après la mort) et offrant la maquette de leur église à la Sainte Mère, représentée en médaillon avec le petit Jésus, tous les deux avec les bras tendus pour recevoir l'offrande et accueillir aussi la famille royale, le voïvode roumain et son épouse, accompagnés de leurs héritiers proposent à la postérité un scénario du pouvoir légitime et de sa transmission bénie et confirmée, parce que le geste de la Sainte Vierge est aussi un geste de présentation des élus de Dieu, tout comme celui de l'Enfant Jésus, qui les bénit avec ses deux mains.

Puisque c'est un thème qui mérite une analyse approfondie, l'analyse de l'iconographie fera l'objet d'un autre article qui étudiera les fresques votives où Neagoe Basarab est représenté (Curtea de Argeș, Snagov, Târgoviște etc.), les icônes de famille et les icônes du monastère Dionysiou en rapport aussi avec l'imaginaire des mêmes thèmes et motifs, beaucoup d'influence hésychaste, développés dans le livre des *Enseignements*.

Nous nous arrêterons ici sur un seul exemple, celui de la très touchante *Descente de Croix*, icône commandée en 1522-1523 par Milica Despina après la mort de son mari, le voïvode Neagoe Basarab, et de son fils, le jeune Théodose, qui n'avait eu le temps de régner que quelques mois.

Ce chef d'œuvre de sensibilité et délicatesse représente la Mère de Dieu endolorie devant la croix (avec les instruments des passions du Christ), tenant son fils sans vie dans ses bras et, à côté, à gauche de la croix, la princesse Milica qui, dans un geste en miroir, tient dans ses bras elle aussi son fils mort trop jeune. La douleur imprimée dans les expressions des visages et la gestuelle discrète des protagonistes (la complainte empathique de Saint Jean le Théologien assistant, comme témoin impuissant, à la douleur des deux mères et couvrant son visage avec la main, le visage perdu, rêveur de Marie Madeleine qui a l'air de transgresser ce monde, le jeu des regards – la souffrance de la Vierge qui regarde son fils et aussi celle de Despina, qui regarde, à son tour, la Sainte Mère) dépasse le modèle de la peinture byzantine et s'approche de la peinture italienne de la Renaissance, insistant sur le côté humain des personnages sacrés et mettant en évidence *le traitement nouveau des émotions*.

Un élément complètement inhabituel est aussi, au-delà du thème de la Descente de Croix qui est déjà très rare dans les icônes, la double Pietà, l'introduction de l'histoire humaine, avec sa souffrance, à l'intérieur de l'histoire divine et en parallèle de celle-ci. La rencontre des deux histoires se fait avec une attention délicate aux détails représentant l'affection – les mains des mères tenant, avec tendresse, l'une la main du fils sans vie et l'autre sa tête, comme si l'on berçait un petit enfant endormi. L'utilisation de la couleur dorée pour les corps – qui donne une impression générale rare, de statuaire en bronze animé, et prouve l'art du peintre – fait penser encore une fois à la valeur de *l'être humain en tant que la plus précieuse création de Dieu* et à *la vie humaine* qui doit se faire, comme la pratique de l'hésychasme l'enseigne, *dans la contiguïté ininterrompue du divin*.



Descente de Croix,
Icône, tempera sur bois, 1522-1523
le Musée National d'Art de Roumanie, Bucarest²⁶

²⁶ Je remercie le Musée National d'Art de Roumanie, Bucarest pour la générosité de m'offrir les droits de reproduction et publication de l'image. Mes remerciements particuliers à Madame Iulia Dumitraşcu pour son aide.

Conclusions

Nous avons ainsi la mesure de l'Humanisme roumain (venant dans le sillage de l'Humanisme byzantin hésychaste) où, par différence avec l'Humanisme occidental, l'homme ne doit ni s'opposer au christianisme, ni détrôner Dieu pour (re)devenir le centre du monde. Dans l'interprétation que l'hésychasme soutient aussi et qu'on retrouve pareillement dans les *Enseignements*..., l'homme a été dès le début de la Genèse la création parachevée (*desăvârșită*) de Dieu qui a fait le monde pour lui et qui, en le plaçant justement en son centre, l'a investi en maître de ce monde, comme l'avait théorisé la doctrine de « l'union avec Dieu » développée déjà par Grégoire de Nysse et Maxime le Confesseur et reprise et approfondie par Grégoire Palamas. L'oubli de cette fonction et la perte de la nature parfaite a été le résultat du péché originel. L'*humanisme hésychaste* propose sa pratique spirituelle justement dans le but de réparer les conséquences de cet oubli et de repositionner l'homme *purifié et déifié/îndumnezeit*, comme au début, à côté de Dieu, au centre du monde.

Quand Neagoe Basarab écrit, en citant le *Lévitique* repris par l'apôtre Paul, « Soyez saints, comme moi aussi je suis saint » et continue comme si c'était toujours la citation biblique « soyez dieux, comme moi je suis Dieu », il prêche justement cet idéal de *théosis* hésychaste. Et son argumentation est d'autant plus cohérente et soutenue qu'elle vient dans la continuation de l'énumération du « don qu'il [Dieu, *n.n.*] nous a fait » en « élevant notre nature humaine au-dessus de tous les pouvoirs célestes ». Appuyant sur la valeur du don divin – « tous les êtres qui sont sous le ciel, les créations de Dieu sont toutes conçues et ordonnées au service et à l'usage du peuple humain : le soleil, la lune, les étoiles, l'air, les vents, les pluies, la terre et la mer », le *domn* roumain (du lat. *dominus*, le même terme qu'on emploie pour dire en roumain le vocatif de Dieu ou du seigneur du pays) renforce, en fait, en l'exprimant explicitement, la qualité d'héritier divin de l'homme : « Et l'homme, il le fit vivant, et empereur, et vainqueur [...] et le fit compagnon et héritier et fils aimé et lui accorda d'être dieu et vainqueur en son royaume céleste »²⁷. Le tout pour focaliser sur la nature divine de l'homme comme création parachevée (*desăvârșită*) de Dieu et, par suite, sur son devoir de restaurer cette nature initiale parfaite perdue par le péché originel et l'expulsion du Paradis, visant à récupérer ainsi sa place originaire dans la proximité de Dieu.

Autre argument en faveur du penchant humaniste de l'hésychasme c'est le fait qu'à la différence des humanistes occidentaux qui, après avoir redécouvert la philosophie de l'Antiquité grecque, ont exalté le rationalisme aristotélicien²⁸ et ont eu besoin de se démarquer de la référence chrétienne hégémonique, les humanistes hésychastes, continuant la tradition des Saints Parents byzantins et ayant toujours naturellement puisé leurs sources dans cette philosophie originaire tellement familière pour eux²⁹, restent sans rupture dans leur cohérence des sources croisées et la perspective de la vision métaphysique néoplatonicienne (présente, entre les influences des hésychastes, chez Iamblichos, Olympiodore le Jeune, Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Siméon le Nouveau Théologien etc.) chez qui le dialogue avec la transcendance

²⁷ Pour toutes les citations de ce paragraphe : „Vezi mila lui Dumnezeu, vezi dragostea lui cu carea au iubit pre noi! Vezi darul lui cu care ne-au dăruit! (Ps. 30:19) [...] Doamne! Că au urcat firea noastră cea omenească mai deasupra decât toate puterile cele cerești. [...] Iar alte fapte care sunt supt ceriu și lucrurile ale lui Dumnezeu, toate sunt tocmită și rânduite în treaba și în slujba neamului omenescu: soarele, luna, stélile, văzduhul, vântul, ploile, pământul și marea și toate câte-s într-însa. Iar pre omul făcu-l viețuitoriu și împărat și biruitor tuturor faptelor sale câte sunt supt cer, și încă nu numai atâta; ci-l făcu soț și moștean și iubit fiu și-l dăru de fu Dumnezeu și biruitor împărăției sale cei cerești, cum iaste scris și zice: (Lev. 20:26) „Fiți sfinți, cum sunt și eu sfânt, fiți dumnezei, cum sunt și eu Dumnezeu!“ (Les enseignements..., 1971, p. 127)

²⁸ Meyendorff, 2018, p. 222 évoque la fascination (finalement réductive) provoquée par Aristote sur l'Occident et ses scolastiques : « la découverte d'Aristote et de ses commentateurs arabes, juifs et grecs a été un événement tellement nouveau pour l'Occident, que les scolastiques ont vu ici la source presque unique de toute science ».

²⁹ Parmi les références qui notent cette omniprésence naturelle de la philosophie grecque antique dans les écritures des Saints Parents, voir aussi Meyendorff, 2018, pp. 213-229, Ducellier, 2006, pp. 444-449, Mazilu, 1994, pp. 45-55.

reste indispensable. *Les Enseignements de Neagoe Basarab* ne cessent d'invoquer pour le jeune fils, futur roi, de tels dialogues exemplaires avec Dieu, comme ceux d'autres rois – David et Salomon ou l'empereur Constantin, qui sont, finalement, des réponses à un autre type de *dialogue continu qui devrait être la prière ininterrompue*.

Ces lectures antiquisantes viennent d'ailleurs naturellement dans la continuité de l'intérêt intrinsèque, programmatique des hésychastes pour la lecture des Écritures saintes et patristiques, cultivé justement dans cette optique de transmission et continuation comme responsabilité assumée, la *predanie* qui y avait rendu essentiel le rapport *magister – disciple*. Quand Neagoe Basarab précise « C'est pourquoi, frères, *il est très bon et très beau et très convenable de dire et de raconter ce qui est utile à l'âme, et de lire les Saintes Écritures et de les considérer*, car Dieu a dit (Jean 5, 39) que „c'est en elles que nous trouverons la vie éternelle“ »³⁰, il redit *l'idéal hésychaste d'améliorer et guérir la temporalité humaine déchue avec l'éternité divine*. Ce modèle *kalokagathique de vie individuelle étendu à toute une communauté*³¹ *d'esprit et ensuite à tout le peuple*, et, encore plus, *comme politique spirituelle et culturelle idéale*, au pays tout entier, donne aussi la mesure de ce qu'on peut appeler *l'hésychasme politique* du voïvode valaque qui assume très consciemment le rôle de *roi-prêtre* et de *basileus bâtisseur/ ctitor et mécène* ayant pour mission de conserver et prolonger les valeurs byzantines avec leur expression doctrinaire la plus condensée et systématisée dans l'hésychasme du XIV^{ème} siècle qui, avant la déchéance de l'Empire, avait configuré et renforcé l'Église et un modèle de politique spirituelle et culturelle à perpétuer, où l'homme, visant à restaurer son lien avec Dieu, réorganise sa vie et sa cité terrestre dans le miroir de celle divine, en harmonisant tout dans une sorte de *divino-humanisme*³² idéal qui est l'expression de l'humanisme est-européen de l'espace post-byzantin³³.

Références :

- Behr-Sigel, E. (2023). *Locul inimii : O introduce în spiritualitatea ortodoxă* [La place du cœur : Une introduction à la spiritualité orthodoxe / The place of the heart : An introduction to orthodox spirituality]. București : Editura Paralela 45.
- Boquet, D. (2022). *Faut-il civiliser les barbares ? Penser et vivre les émotions au Moyen-Âge* [Should barbarians be civilised? Thinking and experiencing emotions in the Middle Ages]. Dans A. Corbin et H. Mazurel (dir.), *Histoire des sensibilités [A History of sensitivities]* (pp. 43-55). Paris : PUF.
- Bordreuil, P., & Briquel-Chatonnet, F. (2000). *Le temps de la Bible* [The time of the Bible]. Paris : Gallimard.
- Ducellier, A. (2023). *Byzance et le monde orthodoxe* [Byzantium and the orthodox world] (3ème édition). Paris : Armand Colin.

³⁰ „Drept acéia, frate, foarte iaste bine și frumos și să cuvine a le grăi și a povesti de cele ce sunt de folos sufletului și să citim sfintele scripturi și să le socotim, că au zis Dumnezeu că (Ioan 5:39) « într-însele vom afla viața de vécî »” (*Les Enseignements...*, 1971, p. 136).

³¹ En pensant ici au concept de Barbara Rosenwein de « communauté émotionnelle » qui relie les différents styles de relations affectives dans les communautés sociales telle la famille, le monastère, le parlement etc. (Plamper, 2010, pp. 237-265), il est intéressant d'observer la dynamique par laquelle les valeurs de la communauté hésychaste se propagent au niveau de tout l'Empire byzantin initialement comme idéal monastique plutôt réservé à des groupes isolés d'initiés et puis comme doctrine officielle généralisée qui sera continuée dans l'espace post-byzantin.

³² Voir *supra*, note 6.

³³ Je remercie Madame Hélène Rivoal- Mateescu pour la révision linguistique en français et en anglais du texte.

- Guran, P. (2021). *Rendre la couronne au Christ : Étude sur la fin de l'idée impériale byzantine* [Hand the crown back to Christ : A study on the end of the Byzantine imperial idea]. Heidelberg : Herlo Verlag.
- La Sainte Bible qui comprend l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament* [The Holy Bible, comprising The Old and New Testaments]. (1880). (L. Second, trad.). Oxford : University Press.
- Lazăr, L. (2020). L'imaginaire religieux dans la littérature roumaine [L'imaginaire religieux dans la littérature roumaine / The religious imaginary in Romanian Literature]. Dans C. Braga (Dir.), *L'Encyclopédie des imaginaires de Roumanie, Vol. I : Imaginaire littéraire* [L'Encyclopédie des imaginaires de Roumanie, Vol. I : Imaginaire littéraire / An Encyclopaedia of Romanian Imaginaries, Vol. I: The Literary Imaginary] (pp. 46-76). București : Polirom.
- Lazăr Zăvăleanu, L. (2023). *Locul unde odihnește cerul : Timpul și spațiul în literatura română veche* [Le lieu où le ciel repose : Temps et espace dans la littérature roumaine ancienne / The Place where the sky rests: Time and space in the ancient Romanian literature]. București : Pro Universitaria .
- Lazăr Zăvăleanu, L. (2025). De l'hésychasme politique et militant à la Renaissance [From political and militant hesychasm to the Renaissance]. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis : Series Historica*, 28.
- Manolescu, A. (2003). Introducere [Introduction/ Introduction]. Dans André Scrima, *Despre isihasm* [De l'Hésychasme / On Hesychasm] (A. Manolescu, Éd.). București : Humanitas.
- Mazilu, D. H. (1994). *Recitind literatura română veche. Partea I : Privire generală* [En relisant la littérature roumaine ancienne. Première partie : Regard général / Rereading ancient Romanian literature. Part I: General overview]. București : Editura Universității București.
- Meyendorff, J. (2018). *Isihasmul bizantin : Probleme istorice, teologice si sociale* [L'Hésychasme byzantin : Problèmes historiques, théologiques et sociaux / Byzantine Hesychasm – historical, theological and social problems]. Cluj-Napoca : Editura Renașterea.
- Moisil, F., & Zamfirescu, D. (Eds.). (1971). *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie* [Les enseignements de Neagoe Basarab à son fils Théodose / The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosius]. (G. Mihăilă, Trad.; D. Zamfirescu & G. Mihăilă, Intro. & Notes). București: Editura Minerva.
- Mureșan, D. I. (2012). *The Hesychasts: "political photianism" and the public sphere in the fourteenth century*. In A. Casiday (Ed.), *The orthodox Christian world* (pp. 294-302). London : Routledge.
- Neamțiu, M. (2025). *Utopia unui prinț: Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab și legitimarea puterii politice prin tradiție* [L'Utopie d'un prince : Les enseignements de Neagoe Basarab et la légitimation du pouvoir politique à travers la tradition / The utopia of a prince: The teachings of Neagoe Basarab and the legitimization of political power through Tradition], [unpublished article].
- Panaiteescu, P.P. (1971). *Contribuții la istoria culturii românești* [Contributions à l'histoire de la culture roumaine / Contributions to the history of Romanian culture]. București : Editura Minerva.
- Păun, R. G. (2001). *La couronne est à Dieu : Neagoe Basarab et l'image du pouvoir pénitent* [The crown belongs to God : Neagoe Basarab and the image of penitent power]. Dans P. Guran (Dir.), *L'Empereur-hagiographe : Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine* [The emperor-hagiographer: The cult of the saints, and the Byzantine and post-Byzantine Monarchy] (pp. 186-224). București : Colegiul Noua Europă.

- Plamper, J. (2010). The history of emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns. *History and Theory*, 49(2), 237-265.
- Prokhorov, G. M. (1979). L'hésychasme et la pensée sociale en Europe orientale au XIV^{ème} siècle [Hesychasm and social thought in the Eastern Europe of the 14th century]. *Contacts: Revue Française de l'Orthodoxie*, XXXI(105) 25-63.
- Scrima, A. (2000). *Timpul rugului aprins : Maestrul spiritual în tradiția răsăriteană* [Le temps du buisson ardent : Le maître spirituel dans la tradition orientale / The time of the burning bush : The spiritual Master in the Eastern tradition]. București : Humanitas.
- Taft, R. F. (2017). *Ritul Bizantin : O scurtă istorie* [Le rite byzantin : Courte histoire / The Byzantine rite : A short history]. Alba Iulia : Editura Reîntregirea.

FROM LUGOS TO HOLLYWOOD: BELA LUGOSI'S TRANSNATIONAL PERSONA AND THE AURAL CONSTRUCTION OF DRACULA IN TOD BROWNING'S *DRACULA* (1931)¹

Gabriela HLUȘCU

West University of Timișoara, Romania

e-mail: gabriela.hluscu@e-uvr.ro

Marius-Mircea CRIȘAN

West University of Timișoara, Romania

e-mail: marcus.crisan@e-uvr.ro

Abstract

In horror literature, acoustic elements heighten sensory engagement and audience immersion in an atmosphere of dread, manipulate psychology, and help transcending the boundaries of imagination. "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (1897) masterfully employs voice, sound, and silence to construct Count Dracula's enigmatic presence, and intensify his uncanny duality as aristocratic seducer and primal predator. This paper examines how Tod Browning's 1931 adaptation transposes Stoker's acoustic strategies into cinematic language through Bela Lugosi's vocal performance and the minimalist soundscape of the film, at the same time arguing that the transnational identity of the actor shaped Dracula's Gothic allure. Bela Lugosi was born Béla Ferenc Dezső Blaskó in Lugos, Austria-Hungary (nowadays Lugoj, Romania), and adopted his stage name both as tribute to his hometown and due to its sonic resonance, that made it highly merchantable, a diasporic gesture that tied him forever to his Central-Eastern European origins, despite being marketed as an icon of exotic horror by Hollywood. Through close analysis of Lugosi's voice, used with deliberate, hypnotic cadence in an English language with a Hungarian accent, and theatrical physicality, paired with the use of silence, diegetic sound, and Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake motif, this study interrogates how auditory aesthetics and Lugosi's embodiment of foreignness converged to craft Dracula's enduring legacy. By bridging literary analysis with film studies, this work explores a central question: What facets of Lugosi's personal charisma, theatrical training, and diasporic identity transformed his portrayal into a cultural archetype that continues to captivate audiences worldwide nearly a century later?

Keywords: Bela Lugosi; Dracula; transnational persona; voice; sound; foreignness.

Introduction

One of the most noteworthy icons of Gothic horror, the figure of Count Dracula is the result of Bram Stoker's literary genius merged with Bela Lugosi's poignant embodiment of the Count in Tod Browning's 1931 film adaptation, *Dracula*. From its origins as a vampire of the Victorian-era to a global icon of Otherness, a metaphor for anxieties about race, sexuality, and foreign invasion, Dracula has cemented its place in the cultural imagination through Lugosi's

¹ Article History: Received: 13.04.2025. Accepted: 14.04.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

artistic portrayal. His piercing gaze, his hypnotic speaking rhythm, and his full, baritone voice with Hungarian accent and inflections assisted Lugosi in transforming Stoker's enigmatic aristocrat into a paradox, that is a figure coming from the Central-Eastern European folklore and refracted through the lens of exotic menace of Hollywood cinema. This article argues that the creation of Lugosi's Dracula owes its enduring power primarily to sonorous elements which fused Stoker's acoustic horror with the actor's diasporic identity, growing a Gothic archetype that continues to unnerve the reader. Stoker constructs Dracula through absence and suggestion inside a mosaic of diaries, letters, and newspaper clippings. His voice is not his own but mediated by the accounts of the other characters and the uncanny soundscape of howling wolves, creaking doors, eerie music, and primal silences.

Tod Browning's film, by contrast, gave Dracula a body, a face, and above all, a voice - a voice that was ineradicably shaped by Lugosi's Central-Eastern European heritage. His deliberate cadence, his unique rolling r's, and the theatrical pauses in speaking transformed dialogue into incantation, while the scarce soundscape of the film (Tchaikovsky's ballet music *Swan Lake*, the howling of wolves, the creak of coffin lids, the squeak of some rodents) amplified his uncanny duality as aristocratic seducer and primal predator. Lugosi's performance was both a triumph of horror cinema and a negotiation of identity - emigrating from a fractured Austro-Hungarian Empire to Hollywood, the world's film capital, in 1920, at the beginning of the Jazz Age, Lugosi carried with him the cultural baggage of a region mythologized by the West as a land of superstition and danger. His stage name, Lugosi - meaning 'from Lugos' in Hungarian, became both a badge of heritage and a brand of exoticism, encapsulating the tension between his roots and his reinvention.

This study bridges literary analysis and film studies to explore how Stoker's acoustic strategies were reimaged through Lugosi's transnational artistic lens. By dissecting the sonic architecture of the novel, we find that Dracula's power lies in whispers, silence, and the dissonant sounds of the nature, while by analysing Tod Browning's film, we notice how these elements were translated into cinematic language, with Lugosi's voice and physicality serving as conduits for both terror and allure. To end this paper, we briefly interrogate Lugosi's legacy as a contested symbol of cultural memory. A Hungarian émigré, largely unacknowledged in Romania during the communist era, partly due to his association with Western cinema and his Hungarian ethnicity, Lugosi has been symbolically reclaimed by post-communist Romania, yet forever frozen in the imagination of Hollywood and the cinema as the primordial vampire. In an era of renewed debates over identity and representation, Bela Lugosi's Dracula demonstrates the enduring power of sound, voice, and the unresolved spectre of the foreign "Other".

1. The Novel

Amongst the tools a writer employs with the intention of building a story and immersing it in an evocative atmosphere, acoustic elements hold a distinct role, particularly within horror fiction. This genre uniquely engages the senses of the reader, provoking visceral emotions and unsettling sensations. It unleashes and heightens the imagination, compelling the reader to step beyond their comfort zones and confront perspectives that challenge their perceived boundaries. Such dynamics are central to Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, where Count Dracula and the other characters unfold their stories within spaces populated with sounds of diverse origins.

Despite being the central figure of the novel, Count Dracula does not speak directly to the reader but is introduced, described, insinuated, or narrated from different perspectives and in a fragmentary way by several characters in the book, via their written words in the form of journals, letters, log entries, newspaper cuttings, or telegrams. The auditory experience of the reader is shaped by the epistolary format of the novel, and all these fragmented accounts might reflect the disorienting effect of some sounds in the narrative.

It has been argued by critics over the time that too little space has been given to Dracula's voice in the novel, but notwithstanding his not having a voice of his own, and regardless of making his appearance only on a few pages in the book, the Count is almost omnipresent. His presence, be it real, felt or imagined, adds a lot to the atmosphere of mystery and mysticism, and the terror he brings or transmits is felt anyway. The reader first finds what Count Dracula looks and sounds like from his visitor, the young solicitor Jonathan Harker. Being an alert, meticulous, and rational observer, Harker registers everything in detail in his shorthand kept diary so that he can later relate his experiences to his beloved fiancée Mina.

The introduction of Dracula is masterfully orchestrated through a symphony of sensory details in which sound plays an essential role in foreshadowing his supernatural menace. Although we may infer only later that it was him, the Count's first appearance in the person of the caleche driver is anticipated by a range of wild sounds coming from the frenzied reactions of the horses, described as neighing, snorting, and plunging wildly, as if instinctively recoiling from an invisible terror. The panic of the animals mirrors the collective fear of the peasants, who respond with "a chorus of screams" and with ritualistic gestures, desperately crossing themselves as a form of protection from the evil. (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 11) This auditory chaos begins before Harker even glimpses the driver, setting the stage for his first appearance: a shadowy figure whose physical description is fragmented. His imposing height, long beard, and wide-brimmed hat obscure his identity, but the lamplight catches two unnerving details: "the gleam of a pair of very bright eyes, which seemed red in the lamplight", and "a hard-looking mouth, with very red lips and sharp-looking teeth, as white as ivory" (Stoker 1897 / 2011, pp. 11-12) When speaking to the coachman, the man already reveals something important about himself: "You cannot deceive me, my friend; I know too much, and my horses are swift" (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 12). This cryptic remark, declaring his own omniscience and the swiftness of his horses, hints at a deeper, almost predatory awareness of the situation, positioning him as a figure of both mystery and control. The man speaks excellent German when attending to the passenger, then he speaks "soothingly" to the horses and whispers in their ears to calm them down. He is in deep control of the whole situation in which both the passenger and the horses are frightened by the agonized wailing of a dog, the sound of which is taken up by other dogs and then borne on the wind through the pass until it becomes a wild howling coming from all over the place, and culminating with the "louder and sharper" howling of the wolves (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 13) The driver remains unnervingly composed, soothing the terrified horses with whispered assurances, a gesture that contrasts starkly with his earlier imperious demeanour. The scene reaches its climax when the wolves encircle the carriage in a silence that make them look "a hundred times more terrible" then when they howled, a moment that underscores the tension between noise and the absence of sound as tools of horror. (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 15) The driver's abrupt, authoritative command disperses the wolves instantly, reinforcing his supernatural dominion over both the natural and the bestial. (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 16) Through these layered soundscapes, Stoker constructs Dracula as a liminal figure: a cultured polyglot fluent in German and later, in the person of the Count himself, English, yet one whose true power lies in his ability to manipulate primal forces.

The auditory motif of anticipation repeats itself once the Count is formally introduced at the gates of his castle. His approach is heralded by the harsh, mechanical sounds of a long dormant fortress, even before he materializes: "rattling chains", "clanking of massive bolts drawn back", and the thud of heavy footsteps, noises that evoke an industrial, almost infernal atmosphere. (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 18). These aural elements align Dracula's dwelling with both medieval Gothic tropes and a more modern, mechanistic dread. When the Count finally greets Harker, his speech, delivered in impeccable yet oddly accented English, mixes hospitality with indirect, concealed threat. His repeated invitations for Harker to "enter freely" and "leave something of the happiness" he brings (Stoker 1897 / 2011, pp. 18-19) carry an

ironic undercurrent, as the castle, Dracula's house, is about to become Harker's prison rather than his temporary housing too.

The theatrical manner in which Dracula introduces himself resounds as a declaration of identity and, at the same time, as a performative act, designed to disarm and intimidate Harker. The author's choice to juxtapose the Count's polished language with the dissonant soundscape of the castle highlights his duality: a nobleman whose primordial savagery lies hidden under the veneer of civility.

This interplay of sound and silence reaches its peak during the arrival of Dracula to England aboard the *Demeter*. The traditional Gothic reliance on visual horror is inverted here by Stoker: the thick fog obscures sight, therefore the audience (both the characters and readers) are forced to rely on the sense of hearing. What we get is an overwhelming auditory panorama of thunder roars, waves crash, unseen wolves howl, all in a crescendo that mirrors the chaos of the Count's earlier appearances (Stoker 1897 / 2011, pp. 94-95). The author suggests that such primal, unstructured noise holds a unique power over the human psyche, as it draws the reader into the limitless terrors of the imagination. The vampire embodies this concept himself, dismissing human music, a symbol of order and civilization, and praising with chilling admiration the more superior, to him, "music" of the wolves (Stoker 1897 / 2011, p. 22). Dracula's reverence for these "children of the night", as he candidly calls the wolves, indicates him as a connoisseur of chaos, a figure who thrives in the liminal space between the civilized and the wild.

Dracula's role as an orchestrator of fear is further cemented through his voice, whose versatility makes it a weapon, an instrument of control. His voice shifts fluidly between tones: soothing whispers to calm horses, harsh metallic commands to summon wolves, and hypnotic sweetness to ensnare Lucy (Stoker 1897 / 2011, pp. 54, 163). This chameleonic ability reflects his broader manipulation of environments and individuals: his whispered orders are answered by the howls of distant wolves, as if he were the conductor of an unseen orchestra of beasts (Stoker 1897, 2011, p. 59). Stoker repeatedly emphasises Dracula's voice and its qualities, like texture, cadence, and emotional range that allow it to transcend language itself.

By weaving the discussed auditory motifs throughout the novel, Bram Stoker conceives Count Dracula not merely as a villain, but as an embodiment of primal, anti-civilizational forces. His power to master sound through silencing wolves, orchestrating storms, or weaponizing his own voice, makes Dracula a perverse inversion of human artistry. Where composers create harmony, Dracula conducts dissonance, and where poets craft meaning, he traffics in terror. This acoustic portrait challenges readers to confront fear as a sensory and psychological experience, one that cannot be fully rationalized or contained.

This intricate soundscape stands in stark contrast to the visual and performative horror of Tod Browning's 1931 film adaptation, which translated Dracula's menace into the language of cinema—a medium reliant on sight, gesture, and dramatic silence.

2. The Film

Tod Browning's film *Dracula*, released in 1931, based on the stage play versions written by Hamilton Deane in 1924, and rewritten by John L. Balderston in 1927, marked one of the most important cinematic moments in the horror genre and set Bela Lugosi's interpretation of Count Dracula as an important landmark in the history of the cinema.

Before transferring his character from stage to screen, Bela Lugosi had played and perfected it on Broadway, in New York, and Los Angeles. The role is said to be his own creation, all composition in theatrical manner, emerged from within, in no need of fangs and heavy makeup, but displaying an *otherworldly charisma, stiff gestures, pauses and odd cadences* in his speaking (Shelton, 2019, p. 108). He was a man of the stage, in possession of all the necessary ingredients that make a great actor: good, masculine looks, deep, guttural

voice, and a Hungarian accent that sounded striking to the public. In Arthur Lennig's *The Immortal Count* we find that Lugosi had a "quite remarkable baritone voice" (Lennig, 2010, p. 20), "a good singing voice" (Lennig, 2010, p. 21), "a sublime baritone voice with its distinctive intonation and diction" (Lennig, 2010, p. 170), "a commanding voice" (Lennig, 2010, p. 244), "a warm, suave voice" (Lennig, 2010, p. 408), "a firm voice" (Lennig, 2010, p. 426), "a voice with a strange intonation and measured cadence" that he also calls *That Voice* (Lennig, 2010, p. 4) when referring to what persisted of Lugosi towards the end of his acting career. Cited in Lennig's book is Bela Kálmány who, in his article published in Színházy Ujság in Szeged, described young actor Bela Lugossy's (he became Lugosi in 1911) voice as rich, melancholic, and velvety, going straight to the audience's hearts. (Lennig, 2010, p. 23).

The role of Count Dracula blends Lugosi's physical qualities with the mesmerising powers of his face and the 'evil eye' look, the slow delivery of the lines in a deep voice with odd inflections, and the carefully lit close-ups (Lennig 2010, p. 107). The film is the first sound version and, for various reasons, no music score was composed for it. The only musical background heard in the film consists of short fragments from *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky, *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* by Richard Wagner, and *The Unfinished Symphony* by Schubert. In 1999 a new version of the film was released, introducing Philip Glass' musical score performed by a quartet of strings. This paper, however, discusses the original version of the film, released in 1931.

The squeaks of some rodents and maybe of a bat, the barking of a dog and the howling of a wolf accompany Count Dracula's silent appearance in the film. The coachman waiting for Renfield is silent too. No words but the 'evil eye' look. It is only inside the castle when the Count introduces himself with his famous line "I am...Dracula.", then greets Renfield with a simplified version of the formula used in the novel: "I bid you welcome". When hearing the wolf howling, Dracula voices his next famous lines "Listen to them. Children of the night. What music they make!" More than the slow delivery of these lines, it is interesting to note the accent he places on *them*, *children*, and *they*, by elongating the vowels the same as in "I bid you...welcome", suggesting the importance given to these creatures and also the bond between them and the Count, the rolling r's as in "I am ... *Dracula*", "...*children*", or as in this "hissing" alliteration "*The spider spinning his web for the unwary fly*", a sibilance that creates a sense of confusion visible, in fact, on Harker's face. Dracula maintains eye contact with Renfield and never blinks, keeping his characteristic posture. Despite his elegance and his manners, the slow movements and the way of speaking, with his foreign accent, are so bizarre that just add to Renfield's confusion.

The voice is sweet and it all sounds like an invitation to listen to something that really is important (them). Sweetly inviting yet unnervingly alien, Dracula's voice does much more than seduce Renfield – it linguistically expands the boundaries of his monstrous kinship. The definite article is missing in front of 'children' and that may imply that other beings, too, fall into the same category of nocturnal beasts, unlike the novel where the wolves and no other creatures are *the children of the night*. This omission implies that Dracula's dominion extends beyond wolves and bats or other non-human creatures, to include his brides, whose silent, spectral presence in the castle represent a shared nocturnal Otherness. The brides, like the wolves, and ultimately Lucy herself, later in the story, become extensions of Dracula's aural persona: creatures bound to him not by fear, but by the unspoken allure of his foreignness.

Contrary to the novel, where he speaks toughly to his brides and sends them away in a commanding tone, Dracula uses a simple, gentle, but very firm gesture of the hand to make them leave Renfield. This aural ambiguity mirrors Dracula's physical command: just as his voice lures Renfield into a false sense of intimacy, his silent, almost courtly gesture of dismissal emphasises his transnational hybridity. Lugosi's character wields power not through overt violence, but through the hypnotic authority of his voice and body, representing a fusion of European theatricality and visual grammar of the nascent sound-era in Hollywood cinema. The

novel, on the other hand, makes good use of acoustic imagery in a situation when describing physical gestures would belittle the sensory effect of the scene.

This tension between sound and silence, somehow paralleling the tension between European theatricality and Hollywood's sound-era restraint, culminates in Dracula's journey to England. Aboard the *Vesta*, his vocal absence becomes its own kind of power. The earlier dynamic between Dracula and Renfield is now inverted, with the Count's wordless, icy-glare and Renfield's maniacal laughter auralizing Dracula's complete domination. This time, his silence amplifies the foreign threat, rendering him an inscrutable force lurking within the creaking hull of the ship. When he makes his appearance in London, however, Dracula re-embodies his hybrid persona, this time procuring himself a different weapon – the modern soundscape of the city. As soon as the Count sets foot in the streets of London, looking elegant and revigorated, he enters the atmosphere animated by street noises, cars, a young girl selling violets, making it his new stage. Dracula makes use of his mesmerizing powers again, and we soon hear the girl screaming, then the passers-by, the whistle of a policeman, people gathering around the collapsed, lifeless body of the girl.

The Count speaks his first words since his arrival in England at the Opera House where Wagner's music is played and where he instructs the ticket girl to do something under hypnosis. He soon introduces himself to Dr Seward, Lucy, Mina, and Harker, as the new tenant at Carfax Abbey. The third and last time when music is played in the film is in Lucy's bedroom on a music box while she and Mina discuss about their new acquaintance. Mina makes fun of his style of talking and his accent, but Lucy finds him fascinating. Browning exploits Lugosi's Hungarian accent, slow and deliberate, that sounds exotic to American audiences - funny to Mina, fascinating to Lucy. Mina's mockery reveals the subtext of Lugosi's vocal performance that marks Dracula as a linguistic outsider, a threat to the anglophone order of the 1930s America. Lucy's fascination reveals the paradox of Lugosi's transnational persona: the Hungarian inflection of his voice, though coded as foreign and grotesque to Mina's ears, seduces through its exoticism, and Lugosi's voice becomes a site of cultural contradiction: repulsive in its Otherness, reflecting the post-WWI anxieties of European "contamination", yet alluring in its aristocratic mystique. This duality mirrors the very ambivalence of Hollywood towards foreignness, with Lugosi's Dracula both a monster to be vanquished and a romanticized emblem of decadence in the Old World. Consequently, his foreign accent, far from being a mere coincidence or just an oddity, amplifies the transnational anxiety of the era, transforming Dracula into a figure who is both feared and desired because he is foreign.

Things happen very fast in the film and Dracula makes his second victim the same night, when he comes to Lucy's window in the form of a bat, the next minute being beside her bed, as elegant as ever but cruel and merciless, and bites her. Just as the howling of the wolves signal his presence and the brides obey his silent gestures, Lucy's transformation into a vampire is precipitated by Dracula's voice: his accented whispers at her bedroom window, paired with the diegetic sound of fluttering bat wings, audibly maps her seduction into his transnational orbit. This shift from mocking his accent to succumbing to his hypnotic cadence mirrors the broader tension in the film between xenophobic ridicule and exotic fascination. Like the Romantic leitmotifs borrowed from Tchaikovsky's and Wagner's music, Lucy's corruption represents the Old World infiltrating the modern soundscape. Once corrupted, Lucy's body and voice harmonize with Dracula's dissonant Otherness.

Dracula is associated with animals like bats and wolves and many times his presence is anticipated by sounds that they produce. He communicates with Renfield telepathically, usually at a sign given by a wolf's howl. In his paper about the avatars and the mutations of Count Dracula as Gothic figure, Giles Menegaldo (2005) considers Dracula a cinematic figure par excellence and speaks about the ambivalence of his status: a predator and a malefic being but, at

the same time, a character of a noble origin who inspires contradictory feelings in his victims: terror, repulsion or, quite the opposite, fascination, devotion, admiration, a voluntary desire to transgress limits and rules. Menegaldo (2005) also argues that the rare moments when Dracula produces a certain effect on the modern viewer who is less sensitive to his melodramatic style, are the close ups when his face becomes a primitive mask and an archaic figure of cruelty (Menegaldo, 2005, p. 207). His powers, although limited, are significant enough to produce important changes in the other characters, to manipulate and command them, to change the way they perceive him, and to allow him to transform into a bat, a wolf, or even fog. The physical appearance of this “attractive, flamboyant, and confident man” (Lennig, 2010, p.249) is what first impacts the viewer, but then his voice, with caring and sensual modulations, delineates his elaborated and persuasive discourse (Menegaldo, 2005, p. 210).

Silver and Ursini (1997) consider somehow ironic the fact that Lugosi, who moved from the stage production to the film role of Lon Chaney’s Sr.’s untimely death should

so completely become Dracula, that the countenance and speech of this quasi-fictional Carpathian boyar should be so irrevocably linked with Lugosi’s pallid expressions and peculiar rendering of what Stoker dubbed a ‘strange intonation’ (Silver & Ursini, 1997, p. 60).

The “accent and florid gestures”, the “thick Good Ev-e-ning” and, we would add, the declamatory “I am Dracula”, the rolling r’s (already discussed), the caped and top-hatted image are unmistakably Lugosi’s (Silver & Ursini, 1997, p. 61). Dracula’s portrait in Tod Browning’s film differs a lot from that imagined by Stoker and, comparing all the interpreters of Count Dracula in film versions, Silver and Ursini conclude that Bela Lugosi’s incarnation dominated the role and infused it with his personal mannerisms like no other. (Silver & Ursini, 1997, p.61) In my opinion, Lugosi was well aware of his vocal qualities. He is cited in Lennig’s biographical book saying that he had a quite remarkable voice. It is no wonder that he rejected the role of Frankenstein that would have muted him completely on screen. To support the fact that his voice was indeed, exceptional, stay the radio recordings using Bela Lugosi’s voice, like Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Tell-Tale Heart*, his interviews on radio and tv, and so on and so forth. In analysing some of Lugosi’s film characters, Paul Batters (2017) speaks about the actor’s voice and the way he used it: “Harsh, gruff and menacing in tone, Lugosi makes Ygor a fuller and meatier villain in great part due to the effective use of his voice.” (Son of Frankenstein), “Lugosi’s voice is also commanding, delivering with intimidation as his eyes burn into those upon whom he fixes his gaze” (White Zombie), “The supposed weaknesses of his voice are at full advantage when he speaks, with the deliberation and control of one who need not rush for anyone” (Dracula). The importance of the voice in horror is underlined by Maiko Lenting (2010), a London based publisher for Hachette: “Horror is even more compelling in audio form because the delicious sense of dread and fear is so well pronounced through tone of voice” Lenting (2010) confesses that she could not read the book but she listened to the audiobook: “I dared not skip ahead in the audiobook (just to check if everyone was okay) like I easily do in a physical book. I loved that other-worldly captivation - especially with my noise-cancelling headphones. It sent wee chills down my spine.”

A penetrating analysis of Bela Lugosi’s voice can be found in Edgardo Franzosini’s book *Bela Lugosi – Biografia di una Metarmofosi* [Bela Lugosi – The biography of a metamorphosis – my translation]

Besides, Bela does not need to resort to particular ‘effects’ as far as sound is concerned: the natural resources with which he is endowed are enough for him, his voice is enough – (...) that voice that a historian of entertainment will not hesitate to qualify as ‘one of the most evocative music ever heard’. Lugosi used this instrument

of his with the same superfluity of sensitivity that blind players demonstrate and which derives from the fact that they are not ‘distracted’ by/ from the sense of sight.² (Franzosini, 1998, pp.62-63)

Bela Lugosi’s voice transcended the role of Dracula to become a cultural artifact of transnational resonance. As Franzosini (1998) suggests, Lugosi’s voice operated with the intuitive precision of a musician attuned to darkness, unburdened by any visual distraction. This acoustic mastery, evident in his radio performances and his on-screen whispers as Dracula, rendered him both an actor and an aural architect of dread. Silver and Ursini’s irony that Lugosi, a Hungarian émigré, became inseparable from Stoker’s Carpathian aristocrat, speaks to a deeper truth: Lugosi’s voice did not just inhabit Dracula’s foreignness, it redefined it for Hollywood, transforming Otherness into an indelible brand of seductive horror.

3. Bela Lugosi: The Man and The Actor

To conclude this study, we have chosen to gather some of the many testimonies coming from several co-starring actors and actresses, producers, and people who knew Lugosi. Their words confirm the idea we argue, that much of the characters he played, including that of his iconic Count Dracula, is due to his voice.

Producer John Mather met Lugosi in Britain in 1951, during his Dracula tour in which he performed 221 times in 22 cities. Because of the way Lugosi hurried and mumbled his lines during the rehearsals, Mather was about to cancel the tour. He changed his mind when the actor came to his part in character: “He stood erect and expanded his chest; a magnificent voice and presence filled the rehearsal hall” and he looked “40 again” (Dello Stritto & Brooks, 2001). Richard Butler, who played Harker on stage along Bela Lugosi in the 1951 British tour answered a reporter’s question

What did you think of Bela Lugosi as an actor?” - “Oh, I thought he was first class. He had height and a stunning presence, no excess weight. He had saturnine looks, and his greatest asset of all, a superb voice. On stage this was produced so effortlessly. He could speak in a seeming menacing whisper at, say, The Hippodrome, Golders Green, and be heard at the back of the gallery. This is before the introduction of microphones on stage—a terrible practice! That’s what surprised everyone, that he was such a wonderful stage actor. You get many people, like Olivier or instance, who give out when they’re on, but don’t give out so much when they’re off, but he (Bela) wasn’t a nonentity off stage. (Dello Stritto & Brooks, 1951)

As a person, Lugosi was seen as friendly, charming and accessible although he did not use to socialize much on set or outside of it. The actor would describe himself as a “lone wolf”.

To Carroll Borland, the interpreter of Lucy on stage and later of Luna in “The Mark of the Vampire”, Lugosi was “the most sexually attractive male” she had ever known in her life, with “beautiful, bright blue eyes”.

In an interview, Alex Gordon, the sole publicity strategist for Renown Pictures, a small film distribution company that later expanded into production and operated in both theatre and cinema industries, reflected:

² Original text: “Bela non ha bisogno, del resto, di far ricorso a particolari <effetti> per quanto riguarda il sonoro: gli bastano le risorse naturali di cui è dotato, gli basta la voce – (...) quella voce che uno storico dello spettacolo non esiterebbe a qualificare come <una delle più suggestive musiche mai sentite>. Di questo suo strumento Lugosi si serviva con lo stesso sovrappiù di sensibilità che dimostrano di possedere i suonatori ciechi e che deriva loro dal fatto di non essere <distratti> dal senso della vista.” (Franzosini, 1998, pp. 62-63)

In a way, I think Bela regretted having turned down the role of the Frankenstein Monster in the original movie that made Boris Karloff famous. Not many remember that Bela was actually a Shakespearean actor and a romantic star before he did Dracula and became typed in horror pictures. He played Hamlet and even Uncas in *The Last of the Mohicans* (6), among many other roles. I always thought the old Universal film, *The Raven*, was one of Bela's best roles, as well as *The Invisible Ray*, and of course his role of Ygor in the later Frankenstein pictures was unforgettable. It is strange for me now to see and hear Bela on TV in his old movies. It is as though he is still around and as though that friendly, uniquely unforgettable voice is still calling. His friends and fans will never forget him. (Lugosi, 2012)

These testimonies crystallize a paradox of his career: a Shakespearean-trained actor typecast as archetype of foreign menace in horror films, whose voice, both on and off screen, embodied the allure and alienation of his transnational identity. Mather's recollection of Lugosi "expanding his chest" to unleash a "magnificent voice" during rehearsals underlines how his vocal power became a transformative force defying age and artistic context. Butler's awe at Lugosi's effortless projection, a "menacing whisper" audible even in the furthest gallery, reveals a voice engineered from the pre-microphone stage, perfectly suited to the early sound era in Hollywood, where every accented syllable could seduce or unsettle. Carroll Borland's description of Lugosi as a sexually attractive man hints at the symbiotic relationship between his voice and visage. The former lent gravity to the latter, turning Dracula's stare into a silent extension of his acoustic command. Finally, Gordon's reflection on Lugosi's regret over rejecting the role of Frankenstein's mute monster further demonstrates the actor's self-awareness regarding his voice, and not his body, as an instrument of immortality. These accounts, taken together, affirm that Lugosi's voice was the conduit through which the actor channelled the transnational duality of Count Dracula, merging European theatricality and the burgeoning soundscape of Hollywood.

Conclusion

The question of what facets of Bela Lugosi's personal charisma, theatrical training, and diasporic identity transformed his portrayal into a cultural archetype that continues to captivate global audiences to this day may long be discussed and can probably be given more than one answer. However, it is absolutely certain that Lugosi was gifted with a theatrical, operatic voice, displaying so many inborn but also acquired qualities, some of which we have mentioned before in this paper.

In analysing a human voice there are several components to take into consideration: tone (clear, sweet), inflection (charismatic, soft, deep, guttural, harsh), accent, cadence and rhythm, rate (fast, slow), texture (velvety, metallic, hoarse), pitch, many of which apply to Lugosi's voice. His stage experience taught him how to use this personal asset in his acting, and that led to his outstanding interpretation of Count Dracula both on stage and screen.

Lugosi's voice, refined in European theatres and immortalized at Hollywood in the sound era, remains the defining element of his portrayal of Count Dracula on screen. Tod Browning's 1931 film, stripped of a traditional score, positioned Lugosi's baritone voice as its central aural motif, transforming, by all its characteristics, linguistic foreignness into a weapon of terror and seduction.

In the end, Lugosi's Dracula does not merely speak. He resonates, a dissonant chord in the symphony of American cinema, forever foreign, forever fascinating.

Our shared hometown honours Bela Lugosi's legacy through the *Bela Lugosi Cinema*, dedicated in his name, and a commemorative plaque installed on the house that now occupies the site of his birthplace.

References:

- Batters, P. (2017, September 11). *The Frankenstein monster: Boris Karloff and his incredible portrayal*. Silver Screen Classics. Retrieved November, 9, 2022, from <https://silverscreenclassicsblog.wordpress.com/tag/bela-lugosi/>
- Batters, P. (2017, October 30). *The top five great performances of Bela Lugosi*. Silver Screen Classics. Retrieved November, 10, 2022, from <https://silverscreenclassicsblog.wordpress.com/2017/10/30/the-top-five-great-performances-of-bela-lugosi/>
- Dello Stritto, F. J., & Brooks, A. (2001). *Vampire over London: Bela Lugosi in Britain*. Lons Angeles and Houston: Cult Movies Press
- Dello Stritto, F. J., & Brooks, A. (1951). *Dracula's last hurrah: Interviews with the cast & company of Bela Lugosi's last, lost "Dracula": Part 1*. The Bela Lugosi Blog. Retrieved October 27, 2022, from <https://beladraculalugosi.wordpress.com/1951-dracula-cast-company-interviews/>
- Franzosini, E. (1998). *Bela Lugosi: Biografia di una metamorfosi* [Bela Lugosi: Biography of a metamorphosis]. Milano: Adelphi Edizioni S.P.A..
- Lennig, A. (2010). *The immortal count: The life and films of Bela Lugosi*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Lenting, M. (2010). *An ode to the unsung heroine of Dracula*. Narrative Muse. Retrieved October 27, 2022, from <https://info.narrativemuse.com/books/dracula>
- Menegaldo, G. (2005). De l'écrit à l'écran : Dracula, avatars et mutations d'une figure gothique [From page to screen: Dracula, avatars and transformations of a gothic figure]. *Sociétés & Représentations* [Societies & representations], 2(20), 199 – 215.
- Parrino, M. (2021). His master's voice: Sound devices in Bram Stoker's Dracula. *Sounds Victorian: Acoustic Experience in 19th-Century Britain* [Online]. Retrieved October, 28, 2022, from DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.9789>
- Silver, A., & Ursini, J. (1997). *The vampire film from Nosferatu to Interview with a Vampire* (3d ed.). New York: Limelight Editions.
- Stoker, B. (2011). *Dracula*. Dublin: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Lugosi, B. (2012, February 23). *My favorite vampire by Alex Gordon*. The Bela Lugosi Blog. Retrieved November, 7, 2022, from <https://beladraculalugosi.wordpress.com/2012/02/23/my-favorite-vampire-by-alex-gordon/>

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ROMANIAN HOLOCAUST IN TESTIMONIAL LITERATURE AND FILMS: FROM TRIVIALIZATION, DENIAL TO WORKING THROUGH THE PAST (PART 2)¹

Arleen IONESCU

West University of Timișoara, Romania

E-mail: arleen.ionescu@e-uvr.ro

Dumitru TUCAN

West University of Timișoara, Romania

E-mail: dumitru.tucan@e-uvr.ro

Abstract

Synthesizing the way in which the Romanian Holocaust has been represented in testimonial literature and films, this article deals with notions such as Holocaust trivialization and denial, as well as with “mastering the Romanian past” of the interwar period and WW2. The article is a cartography of the representations of the Romanian Holocaust; to that end, it follows the chronology of published literary works (documentary texts, memoirs and fiction) and documentary and artistic films which were produced about the Romanian Holocaust in Romania and outside Romania from 1945 to the present.

Keywords: Romanian Holocaust; memory; representations; literature; films.

(Continuation from Part 1)

Much more Holocaust research and “Holocaust literature” was created by Romanian-born writers or their second generation outside the borders of communist Romania. In 1969, Julius S. Fisher, a Rabbi who had escaped from Romania in 1942 published *Transnistria: The Forgotten Cemetery*, a comprehensive record of the deportations to Transnistria, relying on Carp’s *Black Book*, but also on hearsay evidence.

Apart from the Holocaust survivor, president of ICSHR and Nobel prize winner Elie Wiesel, perhaps the best-known writers of Romanian-Jewish origin who witnessed the Holocaust in Romania are Paul Celan and Norman Manea, who left Romania in 1948 and 1986, respectively. Despite his claims that “[t]here is no such thing as a literature of the Holocaust,” and that “Auschwitz negates any form of literature” (Wiesel, 1975, pp. 314–15), Wiesel decided to write his memoir *La Nuit*, a condensed version of the original *Un di Velt Hot Geshvign* [*And the world was silent*, 1954] after a meeting with François Mauriac.² After *Night* (1958/2006) earned international acclaim through its translation into more than thirty languages, Wiesel became aware of the urge to speak caused by the imperative to remember (1958/2006).

¹ Article History: Received: 18.12.2024. Accepted: 09.02.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

² See more about this encounter in Wiesel, 1996. In this text, all translations from Romanian are ours, unless otherwise indicated.

Manea asserted “I am not what we call a ‘writer of the Holocaust’ [...] Neither do I believe in this thematic ‘specialty’ which is practiced, quite successfully, by some writers” (Manea, 1999, p. 29).³ Nevertheless, his famous *Întoarcerea Huliganului* [The hooligan’s return] published first in English translation when he was already in the United States was to make history for its description of Manea’s “initiation” as a 5-year-old prisoner in Transnistria (see Calinescu, 2008; Jerzak, 2008). In the name of *Never Again*, Paul Celan, the French-Jewish poet of Romanian descent, whose parents perished in Transnistria, published “Todesfuge,” whose excess of lyricism Adorno had found inappropriate. The poem’s ending puts in parallel the lives of an Aryan woman and a Jewish woman. Margarete is offered life because she belongs to the master race, while Shulamith is offered death:

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon death is a master from Germany
we drink you at sundown and in the morning we drink and we drink you
death is a master from Germany his eyes are blue
he strikes you with leaden bullets his aim is true
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
he sets his pack on to us he grants us a grave in the air
he plays with the serpents and daydreams death is a master from Germany
your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith. (Celan, 2018, p. 244)

In this context, Adorno put forward his famous dictum “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” (1955/1983, pp. 34; 70; 73), often wrenched out of context and, hence, erroneously interpreted. Huge debates followed (see Felman, 1992; Luckhurst, 2008; Ball, 2008; Huyssen, 2005; Weissberg, 2001, among others; see also Wolosky, 2001, p. 655, and n. 5, where Celan’s response, “we know at last where to seek the barbarians,” is quoted as evidence). Adorno softened his initial remark in *Aesthetic Theory*, where he credited Celan for wanting “to speak of the most extreme horror through silence” (2002, p. 143) and in “Commitment” (1962/1980, p. 188); later on he retracted his slightly reworded versions in *Negative Dialectics* (1973/2004, p. 362), admitting that “perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems.”

The practicing psychoanalyst Dori Laub, a former victim of the Transnistrian camps, was born in Romania. His interview with Laurel Vlock became the first of a massive testimonial enterprise, The Holocaust Survivors Film Project, containing 14,000 videotaped interviews of Holocaust survivors and witnesses. The archive was moved to Yale University in 1981. Known as the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale, it practically marked the beginning of trauma studies. Reputed specialists worked on this archive. Lawrence Langer called for a post-Holocaust revision of ethics and coined the notion of “choiceless choices” (1982, p. 36; 1988, p. 120). Shoshana Felman co-wrote with Dori Laub *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992), an essential text for trauma specialists. Among the analyzed texts and the videotaped testimonies, they also interpreted Claude Lanzmann’s film *Shoah* (1985), totalizing nine hours of interviews with survivors, witnesses, and perpetrators conducted over 11 years in the many visits to four sites across Poland. Marianne Hirsch, one of the founders of memory studies, whose work on postmemory is known worldwide (1997; 2001; 2012), is a second-generation Holocaust

³ Manea was interviewed by Gerrit Bogaard and Jan Willem Bos for *Oost Europa Verkenningen*, Utrecht, The Netherlands, in June 1988; the interview was translated and published in *Familia*, no. 2/1999.

survivor. Her parents who were from Czernowitz “evaded deportation to Transnistria, where they turned right instead of left” (Spargo & Enreich, 2009, p. 53; see Hirsch & Spitzer, 2010 and 2011 on the afterlife of Czernowitz, a major town where deportations started from). Hirsch and Leo Spitzer made public a small archive of Harry Jarvis, whose family survived Transnistria; this archive contained poems written by Jarvis’s sister, Sonja Jaslowitz, which Hirsch and Spitzer compared to Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger’s poetry⁴ (2015).

Born in Bukovina, in 1930 and interned for several years in Auschwitz, Dan Pagis wrote in a “lucid, non-melodramatic tone” reflecting “his attempts to transcend horror through a clarity of imagery” (Ramras-Rauch, 2002, p. 145). Pagis moved to Israel in 1946 and earned his PhD from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he ultimately became one of the most prominent professors of Hebrew medieval literature. Pagis’s poetry is included in Holocaust literature, especially his third collection of poems titled *Gilgul* (1970). Victoria Aarons suggested that similarly to works written by Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Jerzy Kosinski and Ruth Klüger, Pagis’s poetry is often framed with the pre-existing cultural traditions of midrash and lamentation. In her analysis of Pagis’s minimalistic prose poem “Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car,” Aarons shows how the poet “dismantles the very language that constructs this moment of ‘life’” (2014, p. 37). The fragmented poem reads:

here in this carload
i am eve
with abel my son
if you see my other son
cain son of man
tell him that i (Pagis, 1989, p. 29)

The poet has no time to capitalize, to punctuate. He does not even have the time to finish his sentence because the car becomes an “impenetrable tomb. The lack of conventional punctuation and capitalization and the intended deviation from ordinary word order create a tone of disruption and unease, the ‘world’ turned upside down. Here Pagis will draw upon understated techniques of disjunction, disturbance and interruption in order to disrupt the reader’s expectations” (Aarons, 2014, p. 37). The poet becomes Abel, the victim of his brother Cain, “the archetypical sufferer” whose voice can be heard in another poem that is explicitly entitled “Autobiography,” written in an elegiac tone that “is both midrash and lamentation, interpretation and grief” (Aarons, 2014, pp. 37–8).

Works Published and Films Produced in Postcommunist Romania or outside It after 1989

In the 1990’s, several testimonies and diaries were published in Romania. From the first category, we can mention, for instance, J. Alexandru et al’s edited collection (1991), and a collection of testimonies published by Institutul Român de Istorie Recentă (2004). The second is much larger. Moses Rosen (1991) documented his own life, including that after 1945, when he worked as a mediator between the communist power and the Jews who wanted to emigrate to Israel. Miriam Korber-Bercovici’s *Jurnal de Ghetou: Djurin, Transnistria, 1941–1943* (1995), partially translated into English, mentioned the faith that kept her family together: “Still, we did not lose hope and, again, we started to give credence to the silly rumors of

⁴ Meerbaum-Eisinger, Celan’s cousin, perished in Transnistria. Her poetry notebook, composed between 1939 and 1942, *Ich bin in Sehnsucht eingehüllt*, was miraculously saved from the camp, published in 2005, translated as *Harvest of Blossoms: Poems from a Life Cut Short* (2008). On her life, see Paolino, 2013. In 1968, Celan allowed his “Todesfuge” to be anthologized by a German press on condition that her “Poem” be published alongside (see Ionescu A., 2017, pp. 235–6).

repatriation. Poor and persecuted Jewish people! So tormented and so ingenious in giving itself courage through its own lies, born from desires unfulfilled by a God of revenge or of compassion” (Korber-Bercovici, 2004, p. 270). Alexandru Șafran’s *Un Tăciune Smuls Flăcărilor* [A canker snatched from the fire] (1996) was published in Romania after its translation had appeared in Yad Vashem. Born in Bacău, Șafran became Romania’s chief rabbi in 1940 (see Șafran, 1987). Sonia Palty’s *Evrei, Treceți Nistrul!* [Jews, cross the Dniester!] (1992), written after the author’s emigration to Israel, documents her deportation to Bogdanovka where she saw many horrors as a medical assistant, including rapes. Matei Gall’s *Eclipsa* [The eclipse] (1997) details the author’s incarceration in Vapniarka and Serge Moscovici’s *Cronica Anilor Risipiți* [The chronicle of the vanished years] (1999), the anti-Jewish laws and the 1941 Bucharest pogrom. Carol Buium Beniamini’s *Un Sionist în Vremea lui Antonescu și după aceea* [A Zionist in Antonescu’s times and afterwards] (1999) describes the author’s activity as a Zionist.

In 1996, two important diaries appeared: Mihail Sebastian’s *Jurnal, 1935–1944*,⁵ and Emil Dorian’s *Jurnal din Vremuri de Prigoană, 1937–1944*, after its translation into English, *The Quality of Witness: A Diary, 1937–1944*, had already been published in the United States at the initiative of Dorian’s daughter Marguerite Dorian. Both Sebastian, member of the Criterion Association, and Dorian, a Jewish-Romanian doctor, lived in the part of Romania where Jews were relatively spared from deportation, yet their diaries documented the persecution of Jews under the antisemitic governments that succeeded one another in the 1940’s (on Dorian, see Manta-Cosma, 2013; on both, see Crăciun, 2019). Sebastian’s diary recounts his experience as a Jewish writer struggling to become part of the Romanian literary life. Anybody interested in Sebastian’s diary should place it alongside his semi-autobiographical novel *De Două Mii de Ani...* [For two thousand years] (1934), whose preface written by his former mentor, Nae Ionescu, included vitriolic antisemitic ideas (on the relationship between Sebastian and Nae Ionescu, Petreu, 2009 offers a contestable view; more balanced presentations appear in Babeș, 2015; Bejan, 2019; Grec, 2024; Iovănel, 2012; Neagoe, 2016; Ștefănescu, 1968; Volovici, 2011). According to David Patterson, Dorian “lived to see the atrocities of the Holocaust” (2002, p. 42), which is partially incorrect, since Dorian testified only indirectly to the atrocities from Transnistria. Dorian was a *literato* who had published, among others, two novels *Profeți și Paiate* [Prophets and clowns] (1930), a critique of both the Jewish and Gentile bourgeoisie, and *Otrava* [The poison] (1939), focusing on a love story between a Jewish woman and a Romanian man at the time when antisemitism was rising.

Other works documenting the Romanian Holocaust appeared in the 1990’s abroad. Hédi Fried’s *The Road to Auschwitz: Fragments of a Life* (1990), written from the perspective of an Auschwitz survivor, tells the story of her family deported from Sighet to Auschwitz, where her parents were killed on arrival. Hédi and Livi survived, including the death marches to Hamburg and Bergen-Belsen. After the war they went to Sweden where people knew so little about the Holocaust that they could not believe that victims were imprisoned unfairly:

“But why did they send you to the concentration camp? You must have done something?”

What does one reply to that? That we have done nothing? That was why we were imprisoned? Had we done something, we would have been shot. And we hoped to avoid that by doing what we were told. [...] Few can imagine a situation which they have not experienced. And those few are never believed. (Fried, 1990, pp. 179–80)

A sequel to her memoir, *Questions I Am Asked about the Holocaust*, published in 2017 and translated in 2019, answers people’s questions, including difficult ones: how she managed

⁵ An unknown part of Sebastian’s journal was discovered and edited by Alexandra Opreșcu and Teodora Dumitru (2024).

to cope after liberation, whether she hated the Germans, etc. Fried proposed the solution of letting go “vengeful feelings:” “It is not a matter of forgiving. I cannot forgive on behalf of those who were murdered, as the famous Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal said. But you can learn to live with what has happened. You can live side by side with the former enemy, tolerating each other.” (Fried, 2019, pp. 111–12)

Eta Fuchs Berk’s *Chosen: A Holocaust Memoir* (1992), a story that she told to Gilbert Allardyce who transcribed it, is a personal attempt to defend the memory of her family who perished in Auschwitz. Berk always wondered why she survived, and the others did not: “I was twenty-one when I arrived with my family at the railway ramp at Auschwitz in May 1944. On that spot, since 1942, Jewish families by the hundreds of thousands had been lined up, ‘selected,’ and separated forever, some members going one way and some the other. My family went together to the crematoria; alone I was ‘selected’ to live” (Berk & Allardyce, 1992, p. 18). Ruth Glasberg Gold’s *Ruth’s Journey: A Survivor’s Memoir* (1996) is the story of a survivor of Bershad concentration camp in Transnistria.⁶ Sara Tuvel Bernstein’s *Seamstress: A Memoir of Survival* (1997) documents the life of Sara (Seren) who left the Romanian gymnasium at thirteen after facing antisemitism and became an apprentice. In the Ravensbruck concentration camp where she, her younger sister Esther, and two friends were interned, they all supported one another.

Siegfried Jagendorf’s first-person narrative *Jagendorf’s Foundry: A Memoir of the Romanian Holocaust 1941–1944* tells the story of a resourceful engineer deported to Transnistria among other 150,000 Jews. Jagendorf convinced the authorities to let him convert an abandoned spare-parts factory into a Jewish labor colony, thus saving around 15,000 Jews from extermination. To give his memoir more objectivity, Jagendorf’s narrative is intertwined with Hirt-Manheimer’s commentaries; the latter, editor-in-chief of the Holocaust Library, interviewed survivors for two years and used primary sources to establish the truth, since critics had pointed out that Jagendorf was in the “gray zone,” a collaborator who usurped power to preserve his own life. Hirt-Manheimer mentions Jagendorf’s ghetto police’s flagrant abuses of power but preserves the idea that he was a genuine hero who helped thousands survive.

Teréz Mózes’s memoir describing the menacing anti-Jewish laws that changed her family’s life was published in Hungarian as *Beverzett kotáblak (Shattered tablets)* in 1993, translated into Romanian in 1995 as *Decalog însângerat* and into English as *Staying Human through the Holocaust* in 2005. Mózes was born in Romania in 1919 in Oradea, where her family was put into a ghetto. They were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The selection decided that only Teréz and her sister would have a chance to life. Their father went with an old man whom he was helping, her mother and older sister stayed with the latter’s daughter, Anikó:

Erzsi and I went to the right; mother, Magda and Anikó went to the left. Without a word of farewell, without putting up the least resistance, we were separated forever. I would never have thought such a thing possible, that with smiles on their lips and with faces that inspired trust and feigned good intentions, these men could send hundreds of thousands of unsuspecting people to their deaths. (Mózes, 2005, p. 105)

After “[i]n less than an hour [their] human appearance had been taken away,” Teréz finally accepted the truth that “loved ones were no more” (Mózes, 2005, pp. 114; 117). After liberation in February 1945, the two sisters stayed in several Soviet camps before returning to their shattered hometown in August 1945.

Avigdor Shachan’s *Burning Ice: The Ghettos of Transnistria* (1996) describes the

⁶ In the post-1989 testimonies outside Romania, a tradition of ghost-writing was inaugurated: see Mihăilescu, 2021a; 2021b.

Czernowitz Ghetto set up on October 11, 1941, as a station for deportation to Transnistria, then gives details about the death marches to Bessarabia and Ukraine. He explains the oxymoron in the title from the very beginning:

There I saw the bitterly savage cold kill its victims with fiery-hot needles. That is why I named my book *Burning Ice*. When I was about eleven years old, the maniacal storm of annihilation subsided, and when I was about to return to the land of the living I was sworn to tell that to which I had been a witness there, in the land of death and destruction. (Shachan, 1996, p. 1)

The volume gathers figures from different sources, counting the number of victims as follows: “According to our estimate, 310,000 of the 330,000 Jews who had been in the area before the invasion were killed. The 20,000 Jews who had survived the terrible slaughter were scattered during October and November 1941 among the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina who had arrived in Transnistria after forced marches, and their fates thus remained intertwined until the Soviet army again conquered the area” (Shachan, 1996, p. 168).

Zimra Harsányi, pen name Ana Novac, was a fourteen-year-old Jewish girl from Transylvania who was deported to Auschwitz and Płaszów. She used any scraps of paper hidden by other inmates to write her diary which was a form of therapy:

Today I am convinced that the journal was what allowed me to survive. For the rest of my life, it has also been a way to survive that survival, which is a less obvious problem. The fact that I had the toughness to live, to function, to keep my health and my sanity, after and despite the loss of my family, meant that — as illogical as it may seem — I carried, and still carry, the weight of a solitary crime: having lived. (Novac, 1997, p. 9)

Aharon Appelfeld was born in 1932 in Jadova Commune, Storojineț County, near Czernowitz. His mother was killed by the Nazis, and he was deported with his father in Transnistria. Appelfeld evaded, surviving in a Ukrainian gang who adopted him (see Ramras-Rauch, 1994; Budick, 2005). The book starts with a warning for his readers who are told that memory is fluid and hard to reconstruct:

THE PAGES BEFORE YOU are segments of contemplation and memory. Memory is elusive and selective; it holds on to what it chooses to hold on to. I won't say that it retains only what is good and pleasant. Very like a dream, memory takes specific details out of the viscous flow of events — sometimes tiny, seemingly insignificant details — stores them deeply away, and at certain times brings them up to the surface. Like a dream, memory also tries to imbue events with some meaning. (Appelfeld, 2004, p. v, original emphasis)

As Emily Miller Budick remarked (2011, p. 157), when this autobiography appeared, “certain critics expressed disappointment that the text did not contain fuller and more concrete historical information about Appelfeld's rather remarkable life, especially his early childhood years before and during the Holocaust.” When he was eight, he lost his childhood, having no home, no mother and no father; “[w]hat he has instead is a natural landscape, inhabited less by people than by water, pastures, trees, birds, animals, and everything else that defines a natural as opposed to a populated environment” (Budick, 2011, p. 159). Appelfeld's vagueness suggests his confusion. We hear that he spent his childhood in Czernowitz only in Chapter 23. The memoir “shows how unlike regular autobiographies by Holocaust adult survivors, child survivors' memoirs are less constructed around factual events of private and public relevance

and that they concentrate on deeply entrenched sensations” (Mihăilescu, 2015b, p. 7). Nevertheless, Appelfeld’s story makes us aware of the urgency of writing, of leaving a trace behind in the face of annihilation.

Martha Blum’s *The Walnut Tree* (1999) is a fictional survival story of a well-to-do young Jewish woman, Süssel, who had studied languages and pharmacy in several universities in Europe, her father and her childhood suitor, Max. The book is narrated by several first-person narrators. A male narrator explains the significance of the walnut tree. Similarly to the cherry trees in Daghani’s memoir that we dealt with in Part 1, the walnut tree is the place where the Cernowitz victims were buried:

And now my father is carrying Lev-Jossel Green’s body. Father had to free him first from the entanglement of his youngest child, Lisa. We heaped them under the walnut tree, to let them rest. Our massive walnut tree, its branches broad and outreaching, sheltering, its top branches touching the clouds, a dreamworld lost in its foliage, now all these dreams lying under it. We did not see the blood until the sun rose, the blood on our hands, faces, clothes, and soles. We washed as well as we could and without a murmur descended into the garden to dig the mass grave under the walnut tree. It was not easy. The tree resisted, its roots rebelled, opposed our shovels and spades, did not want our bodies. The tree knew these people as children, climbing its mighty branches, almost to the top. Knew the sound of their playing, laughing, teasing voices, and now it resisted their muted forms. So we moved the bodies, carried them into the open of the garden. (Blum, 1999, pp. 69–70)

Those who were not killed were crowded in the ghetto before being sent in trucks to Transnistria:

My mother can’t cross the room, there are fifty people between us, sitting on suitcases and bundles. Instead we speak to each other in sign language, with hands, eyes, and bodies. The ghetto doors are locked. What we know comes through the air, windows, keyholes. Information flows, fed by rage, hope, caught by antennae on our skins. Through the windows we see the trucks leave. We can’t believe our eyes. It can’t be true. (Blum, 1999, p. 74)

They were told lies: “Resettlement — Palestine, Ukraine, somewhere” (Blum, 1999, p. 74). They ate their last provisions without knowing what awaits them:

The ghetto room is dense with Jews, some I know and some strangers. Slowly, without realizing it, I gain more elbow-room, more breathing space, and suddenly I miss the pressure, the bodily closeness. Someone says, “You haven’t eaten,” and shares an open tin of sardines, while I look through my window, watching the trucks leave. Faintly recognize the woman I slept next to on the floor. There is no escaping the sardine smell. I hear the man say, “Drink the oil from the can, it will keep you for a while.” (Blum, 1999, p. 85)

Salomon Isacovici’s *Man of Ashes*, initially published in Mexico in 1990 as *Hombre de cenizas* and awarded the Fernando Jeno Prize, was published in English in a revised form in 1999. Isacovici was born to a farming family in Sighet which one day in 1940 was taken by Hungary. In 1944 the Germans arrived and all Jews from Sighet, including Isacovici and his family, were pushed into cattle cars and taken to Auschwitz. The memoir starts abruptly with the perspective of the witness:

Killing is their daily work. They killed my mother, Basia, who clung to life hoping to see her children grow up. They took the lives of my younger sisters, Blima and Pesil, before

they had reached the prime of life. They destroyed my father, Hers, a skeletal somnambulist. They gunned down my adopted brother, Schmiel, whose life had been so painful. They poisoned my brother Saul, forcing him to be grateful for his hunger. They suffocated my grandfather Mordecai, a blacksmith whose beard was longer than his age. Cousins, friends, neighbors—all of us—faced death.

I am Salomon Isacovici, a Jew from Sighet, Romania. I am a witness. I have endured it all. (Isacovici & Rodriguez, 1999, p. 1)

The memoir ends symmetrically, with the witness who has become a “man of ashes”:

I repeat, “Killing is their daily work.” But I am a survivor, a man of ashes. Ashes of my mother, smeared across the palm of my hand ... ashes of my people and their history beneath which the coals of hatred still glow hot ... ashes, like those of the phoenix, from which I have been reborn on so many occasions and against all odds ... ashes of the Sangay volcano venting nature’s inexorable, incomprehensible fury... dust and ashes of which I was made and to which I must return. (Isacovici & Rodriguez, 1999, p. 236)

The new millennium saw many memoirs and novels published both in Romania and abroad. We no longer divide them geographically here but rather follow a chronological order which is abandoned only in the case of those writers who wrote more than one testimony.

Written from the perspective of an official member of the Jewish community, Arnold Schwefelberg’s *Amintirile unui Intelectual Evreu din Romania* (2000) focuses on its initiatives and on the Jewish institutions’ network during the Holocaust. Schwefelberg witnessed the 1941 Bucharest Pogrom directly, being arrested and beaten for one day and one night and robbed after his release. He witnessed the Iași pogrom indirectly, as a member of the Relief Commission which paid 5 million lei for saving the rest of the Jewish population from a massacre.⁷

By 2000, second-generation memoirs also appeared. Anca Vlasopolos’s *No Return Address: A Memoir of Displacement* (2000) intersperses “(post)memories of the Holocaust with memories of Communism in view of configuring and understanding cultural spaces” (Mihăilescu, 2015a, p. 203) and documents her mother’s ordeals in Auschwitz and three other Nazi labor camps.

Leopold Schobel and Marilena Lică-Maşala’s “*Am fost la Auschwitz deţinutul A-13221: Convorbire realizată cu Leopold Schobel* [I was inmate A-13221 in Auschwitz: A conversation with Leopold Schobel] (2002) is a dialogue with a former Auschwitz prisoner. B. Brănişteanu’s three-volume diary (2003) starts in 1943 with an account about the Jewish community and leadership after the deportation to Transnistria of the former Jewish leader, Dr. Filderman. Brănişteanu met Dr. Filderman after he was released from Moghilev on August 6, 1943.

Ernő Lazarovits spent his childhood in Szilágysomlyó, and his school years in Kolozsvár (Cluj). His *Wanderer in Hell*, translated as *Călător prin Iad: Povestea Adevărată a unui Supravieţuitor* (2004), describes the protagonist’s experiences after he was interned in Deutsch-Schützen, Austria, then drafted into the Budapest labor battalion in May 1944. The forced laborers were herded towards the western border of the country (Gánt, Bodajk, Mór, Fertőrákos, Szombathely), and later transferred by the Hungarian gendarmes to the German Todt organization, which took them to Deutsch-Schützen. Subsequently, they had to go on foot to Mauthausen, and they were finally liberated in Gunskirchen, Austria, on May 4, 1945. After his liberation, he returned to Kolozsvár in August 1945.

⁷ On the Iași Pogrom, see also Luca, 1989, and Cernea, 2002.

Within the category of child survivors of various ages, a ghostwritten book, *Medwed, Sheina. Live! Remember! Tell the World! The Story of a Hidden Child Survivor of Transnistria* as told by Leah Kaufman, appeared in 2005.

Susan Geroe Simpson, a child of Holocaust survivors who was born in Oradea in 1946, and emigrated to the United States in 1965, wrote a novel, *The Silence of Parents* (2006), and a collection of short stories, *Treasures and Pleasures* (2009). Simpson Geroe's autobiographical narratives deal with second-generation lingering trauma brought on parents and larger family units, depicting the life paths of those who were born in after WW2 to parents who lost their relatives during the Holocaust. Both works include acts of return to places where the Shoah affected some members of the author's family.

Cu Trenul Expres spre Moarte [With the express train towards death] (2007) is a direct testimony of Leonard Zăicescu who survived the death-train to Podul-Iloaiei.⁸ He was fourteen when he and his father were evacuated from their house on Vasile Stroescu Street, taken to the police headquarters for what he called "the spectacle of death" (2007, *passim*), and later forced into the death-train. The distance between Iași and Podul Iloaiei is thirty kilometers, but the trip was eight hours long, since the conductors returned to the previous destination several times to prolong the victims' agony. Zăicescu explained that those who could no longer stand were destined to death. Those who felt that they needed to sit could not survive, as those who could still breathe sat on them. Zăicescu's father, a WW1 veteran, was among those who perished (see also "Despre Holocaust," 2021).

Another second-generation memoir is Haya Leah Molnar's *Under a Red Sky: Memoir of a Childhood in Communist Romania* (2010), the story of Haya Leah, born Eva Zimmermann in Bucharest in 1951. The memoir offers her child's view on being brought up in communist Romania by a mother and maternal grandparents who were Bucharest Jews who had survived the Holocaust after doing forced labour and by a Hungarian Jewish father originally from Cluj, who survived several Nazi work camps and a Soviet labour camp but lost his parents in Auschwitz.

Rosita Fanto's *Rozalia Alone* (2010) is a fictional story narrated by a young girl born in Romania to a Christian mother and a Jewish father, who experiences the atrocities of the Romanian Holocaust. Relating the story in the Present Tense, thus transmitting to the reader the immediacy of the *here* and *now*, she tells us about the pogrom in Bucharest where her brother was killed. She initially sees "mutilated bodies" which are "hanging on butchers' hooks:"

Some have their bellies slashed, their intestines tied around their necks with the inscription of "kosher meat" on their bodies. Human beings who have gone through all the stages of animal slaughter on a conveyor belt. I close my eyes as tight as I can and hope that when I open them, the nightmare in front of me will have disappeared. (Fanto, 2010, p. 35)

In this mass of corpses of Jewish people, she discovers her brother:

Aunt Josephine squeezes my hand. Tears roll down our cheeks. I want to take Odo down. There is a wooden box. I bring it close to where Odo is hanging. I try to reach the hook that holds him by his neck. I can only just touch his stiff, frozen body. I can't reach the hook. With all my might, I try to push Odo up. His body slides through my hands. I find another box to place on top of the first one. Aunt Josephine helps me climb up. Now I have Odo's head against my chest. With both my hands I push and twist him on one side. I am almost there. Then the box moves and I fall down amidst the newspapers and dried blood.

⁸ Leonard Zăicescu, born in 1927, remains the only survivor of this tragedy today.

When I raise my eyes toward Odo's neck, most of the lower part of the hook is showing. I want Odo down. I want Odo. I cry. I must have Odo's hook! Aunt Josephine steps on the wooden box, lowers Odo and, without a word, hands me the hook. I caress Odo's neck again and again and place the hook in the bun at the back of my neck. I'll keep it there with me, I'll never take it out. I am in terrible pain. A cold wind penetrates every part of me. (Fanto, 2010, p. 35)

In another scene, the family goes to Iași, to Rosita's aunt. Her mother who has never recovered from depression commits suicide. In an attempt to run away to Bucharest right away, as violence against the Jews has started, both daughter and father are caught in the crowd being pushed towards one of the death trains. They both survive, making a hole in a plank with the hook that had killed Odo; through that hole they can breathe. When the train finally stops at night, they are saved by Janos, the husband of their former Hungarian servant, who hides them in his cart under the treasures he stole from the deceased victims:

"Shut up," he says. He lifts me up, lays me in the cart next to father, next to the shoes, next to the watches, the bracelets, the rings. He dips his dirty handkerchief in water, wipes my face with it, then makes me drink straight from the bucket. I am on all fours, like an animal, with my tongue out. I can drink and drink and drink. I hear soldiers approaching us. Janos covers me and father with the blanket and piles shoes and shirts on top of us. My head is swaying. Father is alive and so am I. (Fanto, 2010, pp. 43–4)

After returning to Bucharest, and losing her father too, Rozalia manages to escape from Romania. Fanto revealed that she began writing her book after seeing "photographs and documents on what had happened in Romania to Jews in the late nineteen thirties and early nineteen forties" (2010, p. 385). She saw *Rozalia Alone* as an act of justice and a protest against the lack of documentation about these events, since she was "outraged by the silence kept by those who knew about the barbarities of the Légionnaires and the Iron Guard. [...] This and other inhuman acts had been practiced by organized groups not known by the world." (Fanto, 2010, p. 385)

After featuring in the film *Forgiving Dr Mengele* (2005) that will be dealt with later, Eva Mozes Kor, decided to write her book *Surviving the Angel of Death: The True Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz* (2011). Mozes Kor's family was from Portz, Transylvania, which had become part of Hungary. Eva and her sister Miriam were the only survivors. They were among the twins on whom Mengele performed his medical experiments. Mozes Kor had been injected with a chemical that almost killed her, yet she miraculously survived. Mengele himself was amazed by her resilience. Although she was liberated from Auschwitz and had a few years of happiness, setting up a family, her sister died young, after she gave birth to her children; her kidneys remained at the size they were when she was ten and injected with Mengele's poisons. Mozes Kor donated one kidney, but her sister's body still could not cope with the unknown effects of the criminal medical experiments from Auschwitz. After losing the only relative whom she still had, Mozes Kor thought that forgiving her tormentors was the only solution to live a normal life. This is by far the most controversial memoir of a Holocaust survivor, who declared that she forgave not only Dr Mengele, but also all the Nazis. Other controversial gestures of Mozes Kor include giving a declaration of amnesty in the presence of a former Nazi doctor during one of the commemorations from Auschwitz or making similar declarations in the presence of other former victims of Mengele. A lot has been written on forgiveness and on the impossibility of Holocaust victims to forgive their tormentors (see, among others, Jankélévitch, 1996 and Derrida's response [2005]). However, Mozes Kor's gesture is not forgiveness, but a form of self-healing presented as a form of restorative justice; "with the

passing of time and the change of generations, forgiveness and reconciliation would be possible” (Ionescu A., 2020, p. 40) but they are highly unlikely for the generation of those who survived and lost their entire families in the Holocaust. For the first-generation, claiming to forgive the unforgivable is highly problematic in terms of ethics.⁹

Starting with 2012, Mihaela Gligor embarked on a pioneering project at several archives within the Hebrew University of Jerusalem which resulted in two edited (2018, 2020) and two co-edited with Miriam Caloianu (2012, 2013) volumes of correspondence of Jewish intellectuals covering the rising of antisemitism and the Holocaust in Romania.¹⁰

I.T. Morar’s novel *Negru și Roșu* [Black and Red] (2013) focuses on the deportation of the Roma population. The main character, Georgian Nicolau, a gypsy from Tărtășești, who obtained a scholarship in a military high school, broke the ties with his family, claiming to be a “green” Romanian. He fights on the battlefield in the East, including in the attack against Odessa, and participates in the Odessa massacre, becoming an admirer of Antonescu. Morar borrows his comrades’ antisemite, violent, nationalist discourse: “In whatever way they [the Jews] are guilty, because of them the world is subjugated. [...] They are the cancer of our world” (2013, p. 111). When his mother and sisters are deported, he saves them, realizing his mistakes. He defects and joins the communists. By the end of the war, he commands the firing squad that carries out Antonescu’s execution.

Cătălin Mihuleac’s *America de peste Pogrom* [America beyond the pogrom] (2014) fictionalizes the Iași Pogrom, blending two narratives. The first, a historical one, focuses on those who lost their lives, the Oxemberg family: Jacques, a gynecologist, Roza, a poet, and their two children, Lev and Golda. The doctor and his son perished in the “death trains,” Roza died after the pogrom. Golda who survived is the link to the second narrative in which Dora Bernstein and her son Ben appear. This second, more personal narrative focuses on Sânziana Stipiuc (Suzy), a thirty-three-year-old accountant who needs to be a guide for Dora Bernstein and Ben whom she later marries. She discovers that a pogrom took place in her town years ago, realizing how the tragedy of Jewishness was completely ignored and intentionally forgotten: “A Pogrom in Iași? At school and at university I had so much history that I used to have headaches. Yet no professor has ever mentioned one single word about it” (Mihuleac, 2014, p. 70). Mihuleac’s *Ultima Țigară a lui Fondane: Istorii de Holocaust* [Fondane’s last cigarette: Holocaust histories] (2016) contains thirteen short stories. The narrative technique is that of imagining microhistories that connect different events during the Holocaust in Romania and the difficulty the nation undergoes in recuperating its memory. One of these stories focuses on Benjamin (Ben) Wechsler (Benjamin Fondane) who perished in Auschwitz. Mihuleac mentions the Holocaust oblivion and denial towards the end of the second and the beginning of the third millennium when people assert vehemently: “Which Holocaust, my brother, where do you come from with these enormities? It is Jewish propaganda, in Romania there was no Holocaust!” (2016, p. 33). Mihuleac’s third novel, *Deborah* (2019), deals with the deportations to Transnistria as well as the history of antisemitism. Deborah Mătăsaru, the central character, is a Jewish woman from Câmpulung Moldovenesc, a second-generation survivor, who is haunted by the image of her grandparents who perished in Moghilev. Other characters are perpetrators who tell their own stories. Aurel(ian) Leon’s story deals with theft and betrayal: he is a thief, a spy, a denunciator. Emil Diaconescu is a history teacher who writes textbooks to justify Romania’s imperialist desires. Some of the events were real, as documented by historians (see, for instance, Livezeanu, 1995). Mihuleac’s latest novel, *Strania Valiză a*

⁹ See Peter Banki’s reading through Derrida’s texts of “[t]he feeling of self-empowerment to which Mozes Kor testifies after having made her declaration of amnesty-forgiveness” foregrounding “the restoration of a feeling of narcissistic self-sufficiency” (2018, p. 86) which Mozes Kor named forgiveness.

¹⁰ See also her considerations on the importance of such testimonies (Gligor, 2020 and 2023).

Domnului Silberstein [Mr. Silberstein's strange suitcase] (2024), keeps an interest in the ordeals of the Jews from Iași, while also going beyond the Holocaust (many pages deal with interlopers from Romania, Romanian beggars and thieves from Paris). An insignificant part focuses on two Jews from Iași, Wilhelm (Guillaume) Silberstein, a sort of competitor of the famous Louis Vuitton, and Bernard Nathan (Natan Tannenzeit), an actor and film director, at some point the owner of Pathé Cinema. They were both arrested in the infamous Rafle des notables, in December 1941. Wilhelm was supposedly saved by the queen of Belgium, while Nathan died in Auschwitz. All in all, Mihuleac's fiction insists on the writer's duty to document the traumatic memory of the Holocaust, trying to make the public aware of this shameful page of Romanian history.

Avital Baruch's *Frozen Mud and Red Ribbons* (2017) is a literary memoir focusing on the writer's aunt, her grandfather and her great-grandparents who perished in Transnistria. Mirel Talos's *Undeva în Transilvania* [Somewhere in Transylvania] (2019) documents what happened in North Transylvania. Although clumsily written, this docufiction is relevant for the effort to emphasize the role of memory in reconstructing the links between Romanians and Jews in two villages from Sălaj County, Jac and Șimleul-Silvaniei during 1938 and 1944. The narrative follows the friendship between two girls, Măriuca, a Romanian, and Gittel, a Jewish girl, who witness different events (the Vienna Dictate and the occupation of North Transylvania), which affect the interethnic relations and their lives. The Jews from Sălaj are deported to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944, and this is regarded by the narrator as a brutal dislocation from the community's roots.

Elana K. Arnold's *The Blood Years* (2023) is based on the harrowing experiences of the author's grandmother, Frederieke (Rieke) Teitler and her older sister, Astra who lived in Czernowitz. Another postmemory novel, Lilia Calancea's *Sunt oare un călău* (2023) deals with the Holocaust in the east. The narrator discovers a family photo that reveals that her father, Kostenko, was a Ukrainian soldier in the auxiliary Nazi troops, the infamous Trawniki:

In the green notebook I have discovered a photo. It made me vomit. I ran away to the bathroom. I did everything I could not to return home. I married the first man who took my hand. This photo, in its grey nuances had scorched me to the core. After it I could not stand my father at a distance shorter than two meters. [...] This piece of white-black paper is the proof that my father was a monster. My father did not have the smell of a bear, he smelled of blood. How does a man who smells of blood look like? I know. Handsome, young, tall, in a uniform, shouldering a weapon. Near other monsters like him, in front of them, a hole. In it, naked bodies. Women... An immense pile of drunken, drugged, crazy women... whichever... but still alive! My father chose death. Why did he keep this picture? Why didn't Mother throw it away? Wasn't she sick? Wasn't she afraid of my father? How could she let him touch her? Carress her? Married to him. Why did she love him so much? (Calancea, 2023, p. 15)

In the first part the father's point of view is privileged – his daughter reads his diary. Fragments that document what happened interrupt the narrative. The second part is written from the perspective of the narrator's mother, Elena. She was a fifteen-year-old orphan, possibly with German Polish origins, when she arrived in the Treblinka area near a mass grave. Kostenko saved her from rape. The last part is relatively fragmented and presents the family's history as well as the tragic history of the region, including that of Bessarabia. The Epilogue focuses on the third generation, the daughter's son whose name is Kostenko, like his grandfather's. As a nationalist Romanian he knows nothing about the Holocaust. His mother invites him to visit Treblinka in order to reconstruct the forgotten past of his family. The son's position is difficult, since he is an heir of both perpetrators and victims, incapable of

distinguishing between good and evil. The investigation of the perpetrators' psychology puts forward a microhistory of what humanity means when moral rules are abolished.

Radu Vancu's *Kaddish* (2023a) is a witness poem that lets victims speak.¹¹ As the poet himself revealed (2023b), "*Kaddish* does not claim to be anything but a document about the destroyed humanity, yet it shows that we remain the species that constructs beauty rather than horror."¹² Vancu wrote *Kaddish* after seeing the crimes committed by the Russian Army in Bucha and Mariupol, Ukraine, in 2022. He overlapped his own biography with the biography of poet Miklós Radnóti who perished in the Holocaust and that of his wife, Fanni Gyarmati. When Radnóti's corpse was exhumed from a mass grave, Fanni found in Radnóti's pocket his notebook containing the last poems he wrote before being killed. She published these poems which came back from the realm of death to assert life.

Finally, in 2024, Marta Caraion published *Géographie des Ténèbres: Bucarest–Transnistrie–Odessa 1941–1981* [Geography of darkness: Bucharest–Transnistria–Odessa 1941–1981], a *récit* following the destiny of her mother Valentina Caraion (born in 1927 in Galați, maid name Berman), and her grandparents, Sprința Berman (born in Chișinău, maid name Ciobricer) and Isidor Berman (born in Odessa at the end of the 19th century). As Russian Jews, her grandparents were discriminated in the Great Romania. When the Soviets took over Bessarabia in 1940 (after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), the family fled to Chișinău and after the war started in the East, to Odessa, which was conquered by Romanians in the fall of 1941. They were all deported to Transnistria. Isidor was shot in the spring of 1942. Valentina and Sprința were saved by two Romanian officers. They survived hiding under a false identity in the town of Berezovka and returned to Bucharest in the fall of 1944. After forty years, Valentina told her story to Ion Solacolu, a journalist of Romanian origin, exiled in Germany. Her daughter wrote the book, including her parents' documents and personal letters.

Based on the daily notes he kept as a physician during his two-year imprisonment in Vapniarka and Olgopol ghetto, Arthur Kessler's account *A Doctor's Memoir of the Romanian Holocaust: Survival in Lager Vapniarka and the Ghettos of Transnistria* (2024) details how the Romanian authorities fed the inmates with a soup made of toxic chickling peas (*Lathyrus sativus*) that induced paralysis, kidney failure, and sometimes death. He and an inmate fellow managed to save hundreds of lives by a daring gesture which could have killed them: they organized a hunger strike which resulted in the camp's dissolution and the prisoners' relocation to other ghettos in Transnistria.

Several films that refer to WW2 were produced in postcommunist Romania. Among these, two denied the Holocaust and minimized the Romanian army's role,¹³ presenting Ion Antonescu as a "great patriot" (Degeratu, 2016; Solomon, 2016), continuing the tenets of Ceaușescu's alternative history. Making use of archival images and documents, Sergiu Nicolaescu's controversial film *Oglinda. Începutul adevărului* (1994) claimed to respect the historical truth. Yet, what Nicolaescu calls "historical truth" is rather post-truth: Romania is presented as the victim of both the Nazis and the Bolsheviks; no deportations are mentioned, and Antonescu is transformed into a martyr, whose purpose was to save his country. The motto „Istoria e prima carte a unei națiuni în care vedem trecutul, prezentul și viitorul” [History is the

¹¹ Kaddish is an ancient Jewish prayer sequence for the dead, regularly recited in the synagogue service, that concludes with a prayer for universal peace. The phrase "poetry of witness" was coined by poet Carolyn Forché in 1993 to describe a type of writing that combines the urgency of the "political" with bearing witness to personal experiences (Forché, 2014).

¹² See also Milesi and Vancu for a discussion on post-confessional poets (2022, p. 7).

¹³ For an unbiased perspective on the Romanian army's participation in the Holocaust, see Harward, 2021. The American historian provides a detailed analysis of Romanian soldiers' motivations during the anti-Soviet war, emphasizing that nationalism ("the purification of Romania"), religious vision ("the defense of Christian civilization"), antisemitism, and anti-communism were the primary public, as well as personal justifications that sustained Romanian soldiers' morale and made them participate actively in atrocities.

first book of a nation in which we see the past, present and future], as well as the assertion at the end of the film „Cine nu are memoria istoriei riscă să o repete” [Those who do not keep the memory of history risk repeating it] remain simply ornamental. Another hoax is Felicia Cernăianu’s documentary film *Destinul Mareșalului* [The Marshal’s fate] (1996) which starts from Antonescu’s childhood and presents him as an exceptional soldier and a Romanian patriot.

Radu Mihăileanu’s Franco-Belgian-Dutch film *Train de Vie* [Train of life] (1998, winner of the Audience Award at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival and of the debut award at the Venice Festival) unfolds the story of an east European Jewish village, whose residents plan to escape the Holocaust by organizing an imitation deportation train (see Berardinelli, 1999). Schlomo, the fool of the village, narrates as if his Eastern European *shtetl* in 1941 were real. This is also helped by The Klezmer-inspired score by Goran Bregović which “succeeds in capturing the prewar vitality of *shtetl* life” (Insdorf, 2003, 286; see also Baron, 2005, 149–54 for more on how Yiddish traditions are presented in the film and the similarities between *Train de vie* and *Fiddler on the Roof*). Schlomo brings the news that all Jewish citizens are in danger and suggests a utopian plan of escape: the villagers build up their own train, make costumes for the villager whose German was the best, Mordechai the Woodworker, who would disguise himself as the ‘Nazi’ general, and ‘deport’ the villagers before the real Nazis arrived. The plan works, despite being menaced not only by the Germans but also by Resistance members and another fake Nazi who is actually a Gypsy in disguise helping his community to escape the Nazis. The film’s ending suggests that all the story was a fairy-tale made up by Schlomo who seems to be a prisoner in a concentration camp. We realize that he presented to us, the audience, his dream from behind the barbed wire, a method which, as Anette Insdorf showed, “might indeed have been more effective had it begun with a greater acknowledgment of its ‘fairy-tale’ premise” (2003, p. 285). The director claimed that Roberto Benigni was influenced by his film when he created *La Vita è Bella*, although this might look improbable, since both films were launched in the same year. One detail that nevertheless has to be considered is that “[t]he script for *Train of Life* was allegedly sent to Roberto Benigni, who was offered the role of Shlomo” (Insdorf, 2003, p. 286). Not surprisingly, although the film was well received, it brought about criticism on the same issues as Benigni’s film, mainly ethical issues having to do with creating a Holocaust comedy.

A special film is *Forgiving Dr Mengele* (2005), whose protagonist, Moses Kor, was presented in the previous pages. The film which preceded her book uses empowering as the leitmotif, yet although seemingly impressive, her declaration of amnesty does not convince the viewers. Moses Kor admitted that her experience “has nothing to do with the perpetrator, has nothing to do with any religion, it has only everything to do with the way the victim is empowering himself or herself and taking back their life” (*Forgiving Dr Mengele*, 48.44–49.03). Moses Kor, also co-founder with her sister of the museum CANDLES (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors) in 1984 after managing to locate 122 survivors living in different parts of the world, remained committed to witnessing to the very last day of her life. She passed away at the venerable age of eighty-five in Krakow on 4 July 2019, while accompanying a CANDLES delegation on the annual educational trip to Auschwitz, hence “literally testifying” (Ionescu A., 2020, p. 41).

In the second decade of our millennium, several Romanian film directors understood that to deal with fault, shame, pride, anguish, an interminable “working-through” is needed; only in this way can we avoid the temptation of succumbing to the desire to close the narrative (we paraphrase here Lyotard, 1991, pp. 29–30). As film director Florin Iepan declared, “[w]ithout cinematography, the Holocaust would be a hard theme to process, to analyze” (2014).

Radu Gabrea's documentary film *Struma* [The goiter] (2001) tells the tragic story of a ship used to transport Romanian Jews to safety during the Holocaust that was ultimately torpedoed by the Soviets in 1942, killing all but one of its passengers. Another film by the same director, *Gruber's Journey* (2009), a drama, was inspired by Malaparte's *Kapput*. It tackles the horrors of the Iași pogrom where over 13,000 Jews perished in the first days when Romania joined its Ally in the war. Florin Iepan's *Odessa* (2013) which launched a whole historical debate describes "the massacres of tens of thousands of Jews in Odessa by the Romanian army while simultaneously revealing the indifference and obstinate refusal of Romania's contemporary society to integrate this page into its collective memory" (Dumitru, 2020, p. 414). *Odessa* reveals the filmmaker's difficulties to raise awareness of the massacre and, from this perspective, is a film about "the making of the film" (Solomon, 2016, 153). It captures the disbelief of ordinary Romanians that Romania killed the largest number of Jews after the Germans, including that of Sergiu Nicolaescu, who is confronted by Iepan with this truth and asked why he did not include the word "Jew" but once in his film about Antonescu. The indifference of Romanians may be explainable since their former leaders refused to speak about the topic, including Emil Constantinescu, then Romania's president, and Romania's former King Mihai. Featuring in the film is also the antisemite Corneliu Vadim Tudor, president of the party Great Romania, who was presented in Part 1. He considered himself a "lamb" in comparison with the British conservatives who practiced antisemitism on a larger scale in his opinion.

Radu Jude, whose "systematic exploration of historical anti-Semitism in Romania began in 2016 with *Inimi Cicatrizate* [Scarred hearts], his adaptation of Max Blecher's writings from the 1930s" (Gorzo & Lazăr, 2023, p. 137),¹⁴ started his series of films confronting the Romanian public with its real past with *Țara moartă* (2017), which describes events that took place between 1936 and 1946, by juxtaposing photographs taken by a Romanian photographer in his private studio in Slobozia in between the 1930's and early 1940's; the photos are shown while the filmmaker reads excerpts from Emil Dorian's diary, which "painstakingly details his anxieties and reflections as progressively worse elements of anti-Jewish policies begin being rolled out with crushing force" (Dumitru, 2020, p. 415). Audio material from Romania's National Archive of Films (nationalist Romanian songs, cinematographic news, discourses of politicians) is also used. Mareș (2017) described the film as an example of a "new radical and political cinema" showcasing an "experimental style, and an acute political consciousness," and "the most radical and anti-spectacular documentary post-2000," "an ambitious cinematographic oeuvre because of its formal attributes and its polemic subject matter." Proca (2017) deemed it as "one of the most intelligent and provocative film essays" (see also Dragomir, 2017).

Boris Maftsir's *Beyond the Nistru* (2016), depicting events from 1941 when Romania got back its territories occupied by the Soviet Union, is the story of hundreds of thousands of Jews. The three main episodes document the fate of the Jews deported to Transnistria: "Revenge of the Romanians" is about the pogroms and assassination of Jews in Moldova (Bessarabia) from the onset of Operation Barbarossa on June 22, 1941 until the beginning of the deportation of Bessarabia and Bukovina Jews to Transnistria; "Purification," the second episode, gives details about the deportation of Jews from Cernăuți and other towns in Bukovina and their suffering and death until they reached Transnistria; "Typhoid Outbreak" focuses on the winter of 1941/42 in Transnistria and in the Bershad and Sargorod ghettos – tens of thousands of Jews died during the outbreak, getting sick in the freezing cold and starving.

¹⁴ In this film Jude used Blecher's surrealist narrating: "random episodes, seemingly free association of words," and an "oneiric manner" (Mironescu, 2022, pp. 98–9).

Romulus Balazs's *Souvenirs de Iasi* (2023) deals with the director's trip to Romania after he discovered a book about the Iași Pogrom containing a series of photographs. Balazs returned to Romania to find the locations where the photos had been taken, identifying almost all of them in two years.

Following his less known *Cele două execuții ale mareșalului* [The Marshal's two executions], in 2018, Radu Jude's "*Îmi este indiferent dacă în istorie vom intra ca barbari*" ["I don't care if we go down in history as barbarians."] whose "footnote" was *Cele Două Execuții* (Gorzo & Lazăr, 2023, p. 152), is a masterpiece. It became the recipient of the Karlovy Vary Film Festival prize. It tells the story of Mariana Marin, an artist who is producing a pageant about her country's celebrated defeat of Soviet forces in the 1941 battle of Odessa. The Town Hall supports the project, expecting "a display of nationalist glory," yet Mariana's desire is "to reenact another aspect of the Odessa victory: the murder of some 20,000 of Odessa's Jews, which was in fact only two days out of a year-long, Romanian-led campaign of mass murder" (Horn, 2019). This is the first film that successfully works on mastering Romania's past, although it tells it in the form of a "mockumentary" (Horn, 2019). It is also the first film in which some of the characters face the traumatic past of their nation, which implies a "numbing and distancing effect of intellectual work on the Shoah" and has a "strong emotional impact" on those who pursue this difficult task (Friedlander, 1992, p. 51). Through Mariana, Romanians are asked to assume their past, hence there is no surprise that she is supported by a part of the team, but she also faces resistance at all levels, from that of the cultural workers who try to change the content of the artistic creation into a soft censored version, to part of the amateur actors and the figureheads who are intrigued and revolted by the nonconformist variant of history that they are advised to present (Romașcanu, 2019). Jude has been regarded as the director who reveals "repressed histories," who explores "the possibilities of cinematic, photographic, and radio archives, those of montage [...], as well as those of 'Brechtian' aesthetics" (Gorzo & Lazăr, 2023, p. 28). There are many events that we cannot discuss here at large, yet two details are significant for the way in which Mariana works on Romanians' mastering their past. First, "[p]articularly well-articulated by Jude" is a polemic targeting "a certain understanding of 'realism,' associated with Romanian director Sergiu Nicolaescu's conception of the historical film" (Gorzo & Lazăr, 2023, p. 122). Mariana, who is aware of the great respect artists have for Nicolaescu's work (for her pageant she uses some costumes from his films), watches Nicolaescu's *Oglinda*, whose hagiographical rhetorics she questions. Second, she unmasks the way he negates the Holocaust in *Oglinda*: "at a certain point he gives Field Marshal Antonescu (played by actor Ion Siminie) a noble low-angle profile shot, with an icon of the crucified Christ in the background and cloying piano music on the soundtrack, as the Field Marshal, brought to trial in 1946 for his crimes, solemnly castigates the ungrateful Romanian people" (Gorzo & Lazăr, 2023, p. 122).

Radu Jude worked with historian Adrian Cioflâncă to create his next film, *Ieșirea Trenurilor din Gară* [The exit of the trains] (2020), a documentary essay that constructs historicity on the basis of a montage composed entirely of archive photographs and documents of the first big massacre of the Jews in Romania (Iași, June 29, p. 1941), where more than 10,000 Jews were killed – first by bullets, then by asphyxiation in freight trains. The montage film with photographs and texts related to the Iași pogrom confronts the viewer because, as Georges Didi-Huberman (2003, p. 3) claims, images confront us "in spite of all [...] in spite of our own inability to look at them as they deserve; in spite of our own world, full, almost choked, with imaginary commodities." Gorzo and Lazăr commented on the way the photographs Jude displayed (more numerous than the only four existent photos taken by the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz that Didi-Huberman used for his book) work for Jude: they propose to the viewer a gaze that "can be a form of patience, an attempt at reparation" (2023, p. 219). Another film

created by Jude in collaboration with Cioflâncă, *Amintiri de pe Frontul de Est* [Memories from the Eastern Front] (2022), features a photo album that traces the path of the 6th Regiment of the Romanian army in the war years of 1941 and 1942, putting the images of everyday military life in a larger context. Both Jude and his codirector Cioflâncă believe that archival photos are a medium that challenges us in the tradition of Susan Sontag (2004) with the “pain of the other.”

Several documentary films were produced in the second decade of the new millennium outside postcommunist Romania: Natalia Ghilașcu’s *Prigoana din Basarabia* [The exile from Bessarabia] (2012), *Persecuțiile din Basarabia* [The persecutions in Bessarabia] (2012), and *Cursed Years in Transnistria* (2016), Oleg Brega’s *Masacrul de acasă* [The massacre from home] (2019) and Olga Ștefan’s four documentaries and one short film. Ștefan set up the platform *The Future of Memory* which aims to raise public awareness through art and media. The mission of the initiative is manifold: “reactivating memory through contemporary art and media, connecting the past to the present, documenting the last witnesses, personalizing history through oral narratives, creating connections between people and opening up public spaces for debate and mutual understanding” (*The Future of Memory*, 2018). Her films, *Fragments of a Life* (2016), *My Illusions* (2017), *Daniel Spoerri: The Wild Child of Yassy* (2017), *Gesturi de rezistență* [Gestures of resistance] (2019), *Vapniarka: The Camp of Death* (2022), are a few examples that prove that we have moved towards a period in which mastering Romania’s past is a must.

Afterthoughts

In this article we have attempted to synthesize a major part of the representations of the Romanian Holocaust in the eighty years that have passed since the end of WW2. As authors of such a vast synthesis, we have been inevitably the possessors of an overabundance of data. The numerous items in our bibliography have been selected from hundreds that have been published so far and with such a wealth of material it was difficult to footnote everything. Our article is offered as a compendium of factual knowledge; it includes succinct presentations of a corpus of memoirs, fictional works and films. We can notice that in the last two decades, the cultural production and memorial initiatives to master Romania’s past and to represent the Romanian Holocaust have intensified and it is only now that we can echo Ștefan Ionescu’s optimistic note that these testimonies are promising for future research, allowing a more nuanced understanding of the persecution of the Jews and Roma population in Romania (2005, pp. 369–70). The historical truth prevails since both Romanian and foreign historians have made efforts to correct the alternative histories of the Romanian Holocaust produced in communist times. Starting with the academic year 2023–2024, the discipline “History of the Jews. The Holocaust” became mandatory for highschoolers (see Țiu, 2024). The need to memorialize the victims, to make people empathize with them has also resulted in an increase in literary and filmic productions. However, as part of the European Union, Romanians live in an age when the messages of the extreme right have become more widespread in the context of a growing global populism. Romania’s Constitutional Court annulled the December 2024 presidential elections after finding out that one candidate was unlawfully promoted through a campaign of fake news on TikTok, in which he combined fragments from discourses from Horia Sima and Antonescu with Ceaușist nostalgia. These are signs that scholars, writers and film makers have the duty to preserve Holocaust memory and continue to promote diversity, equity and inclusion which are part of the fundamental mission of a democratic society.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Florina-Maria Andercău (Matei), Mihaela Gligor, Dana Mihăilescu, Laura Marin, Olga Ștefan and the two anonymous reviewers for their comments during the writing and revision processes.

References:

- Aarons, V. (2014). A genre of rupture: The literary language of the Holocaust. In J. Adams (Ed.), *The Bloomsbury companion of Holocaust literature* (pp. 27–45). London, New York, Sydney and Delhi: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Adorno, T.W. (1980). Commitment (Francis McDonagh, Trans.; Ed.). In E. Bloch, G. Lukacs, B. Brecht, W. Benjamin & T. Adorno, *Aesthetics and politics* (F. Jameson, Afterword; pp. 177–195). London: Verso. (Original work published 1962).
- Adorno, T.W. (1983). Cultural criticism and society. *Prisms* (S. Weber, Trans.; pp. 17–34). Cambridge: MIT Press. (Original work published 1955).
- Adorno, T.W. (2002). *Aesthetic theory* (G. Adorno, & R. Tiedemann Eds.; R. Hullot-Kentor, Trans.) London and New York: Continuum.
- Adorno, T.W. (2004). *Negative dialectics* (E. B. Ashton, Trans.). London and New York: Routledge. (Original work published 1973).
- Alexandru, J., Benjamin, L., Brumfeld, D., Florea, A., Litman, P. & Stanciu, S. (1991). *Martiriul evreilor din România 1940–1944: Documente și mărturii* [The martyrdom of the Jews in Romania 1940–1944: Documents and testimonies] (M. Rosen, Intro.). București: Hasefer.
- Appelfeld, A. (2004). *The story of a life: A Memoir* (A. Halter, Trans.). New York: Schocken. (Original work published 1999).
- Arnold, E.K. (2023). *The blood years*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Babeș, A. (2015). Jewish life in Bucharest at the time of the Holocaust (A research based on the survivors' diaries). *Holocaust: Studii și Cercetări*, VII.1(8), 15–28.
- Ball, K. (2008). *Disciplining the Holocaust*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Banki, P. (2018). *The forgiveness to come: The Holocaust and the hyper-ethical*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Baron, L. (2005). *Projecting the Holocaust into the present: The changing focus of contemporary Holocaust cinema*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Baruch, A.E.M. (2017). *Frozen mud and red ribbons: A Romanian Jewish girl's survival through the Holocaust in Transnistria and its rippling effect on the second generation*. Stuttgart: Ibidem.
- Bejan, C.A. (2019). *Intellectuals and fascism in interwar Romania: The Criterion Association* (V. Tismaneanu, Foreword). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berardinelli, J. (1999). *Train of life* (Train de vie): A film review. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from https://preview.reelviews.net/movies/t/train_life.html/

- Berk, E.F., & Allardyce G. (1992). *Chosen: A Holocaust memoir*. New Brunswick: Goose Lane, Fredericton.
- Bernstein, S.T. (1997). *Seamstress: A memoir of survival* (E.M. Bronfman, Intro.). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Blum, M. (1999). *The walnut tree*. Toronto, Ontario: Coteau Books.
- Brănișteanu, B. (2003). *Jurnal* [Diary] (Vols. 1–3). București: Hasefer.
- Budick, E.M. (2005). *Aharon Appelfeld's fiction: Acknowledging the Holocaust*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Budick, E.M. (2011). Homescapes of childhood: Aharon Appelfeld's *Life stories of Czernowitz*. In V. Glajar, & J. Teodorescu (Ed.), *Local history, transnational memory in the Romanian Holocaust* (pp. 157–174). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Buium, B.C. (1999). *Un sionist în vremea lui Antonescu și după aceea* [A Zionist in Antonescu's times and afterwards]. București: Hasefer.
- Calancea, L. (2023). *Sunt oare un călău?* [Am I an executioner by any chance?]. Iași: Polirom.
- Calinescu, M. (2008). On Norman Manea's *The Hooligan's Return*. In A.H. Rosenfeld (Ed.), *The writer uprooted: Contemporary Jewish exile literature* (pp. 27–50). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Caraion, M. (2024). *Géographie des ténèbres: Bucarest–Transnistrie–Odessa 1941–1981: Récit* [Geography of Darkness: Bucharest–Transnistria–Odessa 1941–1981: Récit]. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard.
- Celan, Paul. (2018). Death fugue. In E.J. Sundquist (Ed.), *Writing in witness: A Holocaust reader* (pp. 242–4). Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Cernea, A-R. (2002) *Pogromul de la Iași: depoziție de martor* [The Iași Pogrom, witness deposition]. București: Hasefer.
- Crăciun, C. (2019). *Scriitori evrei de limbă română: De la rebeli marginali la critici canonici* [Jewish writers who wrote in Romanian: From marginal rebels to canonic writers]. Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza.”
- Degeratu, L. (2016). Reconstructing the memory of the Holocaust in Romania through films. *Holocaust. Studii și Cercetări*, VIII.1(9), 211–226.
- Derrida, J. (2005). On forgiveness. In M. Dooley & M. Hughes (Eds), *On cosmopolitanism and forgiveness* (S. Critchley & R. Kearney, Pref.) (pp. 27–60). London and New York: Routledge.
- Despre Holocaust. Pogromul de la Iași: Amintirile unui supraviețuitor* [On the Holocaust: The Iași Pogrom: A Survivor's Memories]. (2021, August 06). Institutul Național Pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România “Elie Wiesel.” Season 1, Episode 2. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1788793/episodes/8984419>
- Didi-Huberman, G. (2003). *Images in spite of all: Four photographs from Auschwitz* (S.B. Lillis, Trans.). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

- Dorian, E. (1996). *Jurnal din vremuri de prigoană, 1937–1944* [Diary from times of persecution, 1937–1944] (M. Dorian, Ed., Z. Ornea, Pref.). București: Hasefer. English translation: Dorian, E. (1982). *The quality of witness: A Romanian diary, 1937–1944* (M. Dorian, Ed.; M. Soceanu Vamos, Trans.; M. Stanislawski, Intro.). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America.
- Dorian, E. (1947). *Otrava* [The poison]. București: Editura Forum.
- Dorian, E. (1930). *Profeți și paiate* [Prophets and clowns]. București: Editura Națională a Ciornei.
- Dragomir, G. (2017, December 20). Care a fost cel mai de succes documentar românesc al anului 2017? [Which was the most successful Romanian documentary film of 2017?]. Noizz. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://noizz.ro/film/cel-mai-de-succes-documentar-romanesc-al-anului-2017/vkdgy09>
- Dumitru, D. (2020, summer). Review Essay: *The dead nation* (Țara moartă). Dir. Radu Jude. Grasshopper Films, 2017. 83 minutes. *Slavic Review*, 79(2), 412–417. DOI: <https://10.1017/slr.2020.96>
- Fanto, R. *Rozalia alone*. (2010). Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation.
- Felman, S. (1992). Education and crisis, or the vicissitudes of teaching. In S. Felman, & D. Laub. *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history* (pp. 1–56). New York: Routledge.
- Felman, S. & D. Laub. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. New York: Routledge.
- Fisher, J.S. (1969). *Transnistria: The forgotten cemetery*. South Brunswick, NJ: T. Yoseloff.
- Forché, C. (2014). Reading the living archives: The witness of literary art. In C. Forché & D. Wu (Ed.), *Poetry of witness: The tradition in English 1500–2001*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Fried, H. (1990). *The road to Auschwitz: Fragments of a life* (M. Meyer, Trans.). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Fried, H. (2019). *Questions I am asked about the Holocaust* (A.E. Olsson, Trans.). Melbourne and London: Scribe.
- Friedlander, S. (1992). *Probing the limits of representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gall, M. (1997). *Eclipsa* [The eclipse]. București: Editura Du Style.
- Gligor, M. (2020). Câteva considerații asupra dinamicii memoriei culturale în Europa după Holocaust [Some considerations on the dynamics of cultural memory in Europe after the Holocaust]. *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca, Seria Humanistica, XVIII*, 341–349.
- Gligor, M. (2023). Memories in writing: On the importance of correspondence for recovering the history. In C. Voß, K. Kralova & S. Ferhadbegović (Ed.), *Südosteuropa-Jahrbuch, 46, Memory Cultures in Southeast Europe since 1945. Proceedings of the International Academic Week at Tutzing, October 2021* (pp. 253–262). Berlin: Peter Lang.

- Gligor, M. (Ed., Intro. & notes). (2020). *Correspondența Enric Furtună–Henry Marcus* [Correspondence Enric Furtună–Henry Marcus]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/bd/ebooks/pdf/2609.pdf>
- Gligor, M. (Ed., Intro. & notes). (2018). *Note în procesul de epurare a filosofului Iosif Brucăr* [Notes on the purge of philosopher Iosif Brucăr]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/bd/ebooks/pdf/2299.pdf>
- Gligor, M. & M. Caloianu (Eds). (2013). *Intelectuali evrei și presa exilului românesc* [Jewish intellectuals in the Romanian exile media]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/bd/ebooks/pdf/1672.pdf>
- Gligor, M. & M. Caloianu (Eds). (2012). *Theodor Lavi în corespondență* [Theodor Lavi's correspondence]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/bd/ebooks/pdf/1673.pdf>
- Gold, R.G. (1996). *Ruth's journey: A survivor's memoir*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Gorzo, A. & V. Lazăr (2023). *Beyond the new Romanian cinema: Romanian culture, history, and the films of Radu Jude*. Sibiu: Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu.
- Grec, E.M. (2024). *I'm ashamed to be sad: Mihail Sebastian's journal as lived history* (Bejan, C.A, Foreword). Arad: Editura Universității „Vasile Goldiș.”
- Harward, G.T. (2021). *Romania's Holy War: Soldiers, motivation, and the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hirsch, M. (1997). *Family frames: Photography, narrative and postmemory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirsch, M. (2001). Surviving images: Holocaust photographs and the work of postmemory. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14, 5–37.
- Hirsch, M. (2012). *The generation of postmemory: Writing and visual culture after the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hirsch, M. & Spitzer, L. (2011). The Cernăuți Ghetto, the deportations, and the decent mayor. In V. Glajar & J. Teodorescu (Ed.), *Local history, transnational memory in the Romanian Holocaust* (pp. 57–75). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hirsch, M. & Spitzer, L. (2015, Spring/Fall). Small acts of repair: The unclaimed legacy of the Romanian Holocaust. *Journal of Literature and Trauma Studies*, 4(1–2), 13–42. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jlt.2016.0007>
- Hirsch, M. & Spitzer, L. (2010). *Ghosts of home: The afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish memory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Horn, D. (Fall 2019). Romania! *Jewish Review of Books*. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/5563/romania/>
- Huyssen, A. (2005). Resistance to memory: The uses and abuses of public oblivion. In M. Pensky (Ed.), *Globalizing critical theory* (pp. 165–184). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

- Iepan, F. (2014, May 11). Fără cinematografie, Holocaustul ar fi fost greu de procesat [Without cinema, the Holocaust would be hard to process]. *Digi24.ro*. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://www.digi24.ro/magazin/timp-liber/cultura/florin-iepan-fara-cinematografie-holocaustul-ar-fi-fost-greu-de-procesat-241441>
- Insdorf, A. (2003). *Indelible shadows: Film and the Holocaust*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ionescu, A. (2020). Forgiving as self-healing? The case of Eva Mozes Kor. In A. Ionescu & M. Margaroni (Eds), *Arts of healing: Cultural narratives of trauma* (pp. 27–49). London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield International.
- Ionescu, A. (2017). *The memorial ethics of Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ionescu, Ș. (2005). The boom of testimonies after communism: The voices of the Jewish Holocaust survivors in Romania (1989–2005). *Studia Hebraica*, 5, 357–380.
- Iovănel, M. (2012). *Evreul improbabil: Mihail Sebastian: O monografie ideologică* [The improbable Jew: Mihail Sebastian: An ideological monograph]. Iași and București: Polirom.
- Institutul Român de Istorie Recentă. (2004). *Holocaustul evreilor români* [The Holocaust of Jewish Romanians] (A. Pippidi, Pref.). Iași: Polirom.
- Isacovici, S. & Rodriguez, J.M. (1999). *Man of ashes* (D. Gerdes, Trans.). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Jagendorf, S. (1991). *Jagendorf's foundry: A memoir of the Romanian Holocaust 1941–1944* (A. Hirt-Manheimer, Intro. & commentaries). New York: HarperCollins.
- Jankélévitch, V. (1996). Should We Pardon Them? (A. Hobart, Trans.). *Critical Inquiry*, 22(3), 552–572.
- Jerzak, K (2008). Exile as life after death in the writings of Henryk Grynberg and Norman Manea. In A.H. Rosenfeld (Ed.), *The writer uprooted: Contemporary Jewish exile literature* (pp. 75–91). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kaufman, L. (2005). *Medwed, Sheina. Live! Remember! Tell the World! The Story of a hidden child survivor of Transnistria as told by Leah Kaufman*. New York: ArtScroll Mesorah Publications.
- Korber-Bercovici, M. (2002). *Jurnal de Ghetou: Djurin, Transnistria, 1941–1943* [Ghetto Diary: Djurin, Transnistria, 1941–1943]. București: Kriterion, 1995. partial English translation: Korber-Bercovici, M. Transnistria. In A. Zapruder (Ed.), *Salvaged pages: Young writers' diaries of the Holocaust* (pp. 243–270). New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Langer, L.L. (1982). *Versions of survival*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Lazarovits, E. (ND) *Wanderer in hell*. Document. Digitized. Accession Number: 2006.31. RG Number: RG-02.239. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Romanian translation: E. Lazarovits. (2004). *Călător prin iad: Povestea adevărată a unui supraviețuitor*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Institutul Cultural Român.

- Livezeanu, I. (1995) *Cultural politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, nation building, and ethnic struggle, 1918–1930*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Luca E. (1989). *Pogrom, Iași, duminică, 29 iunie 1941* [Pogrom, Iași, Sunday, 29 June 1941]. Tel Aviv.
- Luckhurst, R. (2008). *The Trauma question*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Lyotard, J.F. (1991). *The inhuman: Reflections on time* (G. Bennington & R. Bowlby, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Manea, N. (2003). *Întoarcerea huliganului*. Iași: Polirom. English translation: N. Manea. (2003). *The Hooligan's Return* (A. Jianu, Trans.). New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Manea, N. (1999). Nu sunt un scriitor al Holocaustului [I am not a writer of the Holocaust]. In *Casa melcului. Dialoguri* [The snail house: Dialogues] (pp. 28–38). București: Hasefer.
- Manta-Cosma, I. (2013). Being a Jewish writer in 1937–1944 Romania: Narrative identity developed around Emil Dorian's diary. *Telciu Summer Conferences*. V. Simion Cosma (Ed.). (pp. 164–179). Cluj Napoca: Eikon.
- Mareș, I. (2017, July 30). *Țara moartă: Noul Cinema radical și politic al lui Radu Jude* [The dead nation: The new radical and political cinema of Radu Jude]. *Ziarul Metropolis, Cotidian Cultural*. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://www.ziarulmetropolis.ro/tara-moarta-noul-cinema-radical-si-politic-al-lui-radu-jude/>
- Meerbaum-Eisinger, S. (2008). *Ich bin in Sehnsucht eingehüllt* [I Am Wrapped in Longing]. Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 2005. English translation: Meerbaum-Eisinger, S. (2008). *Harvest of blossoms: Poems from a life cut short* (I. Silverblatt & H. Silverblatt Ed.; J. Glenn & F. Birkmayer, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Mihăilescu, D. (2021a). Dynamics of remembrance across time and media: On Ruth Glasberg Gold's multiple accounts of her Holocaust experiences in Transnistria. *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 15(2), 285–311. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/1872471X-bja10027>
- Mihăilescu, D. (2015a). Gendered intergenerational spaces of Holocaust and communist traumas in Anca Vlasopolos's Transatlantic memoir *No Return Address*. In A. Petö, L. Hecht & K. Krasuska (Eds), *Women and the Holocaust: New perspectives and challenges* (pp. 183–205). Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Mihăilescu, D. (2021b). Ghost-writing World War II memories: Romanian Holocaust survivors' life stories in Post-Cold War Western societies. In M. Schwartz, N. Weller & H. Winkel (Ed.), *After memory: World War II in contemporary Eastern European literatures* (pp. 83–110). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110713831-005>
- Mihăilescu, D. (2015b). Holocaust child survivors' memoirs as reflected in Appelfeld's *The story of a life*. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 17(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2711>
- Mihuleac, C. (2014). *America de peste pogrom: Roman* [America beyond the pogrom: A novel]. București: Cartea Românească.
- Mihuleac, C. (2019). *Deborah*. București: Humanitas.

- Mihuleac, C. (2016). *Ultima țigară a lui Fondane: Istorie de Holocaust* [Fondane's last cigarette: Holocaust histories]. București: Cartea Românească.
- Mihuleac, C. (2024). *Strania valiză a domnului Silberstein* [Mr Silberstein's strange suitcase]. București: Humanitas.
- Milesi, L. & Vancu, R. (2022) Introduction: 'Make It New' Once Again: Experimental Trends in 21st-Century Poetry in English. *Word and Text – A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*, 12, 5–11. DOI: <https://10.51865/JLSL.2022.01>
- Mironescu, D. (2022). Poetry, disability and metamodernism: Ilya Kaminsky's *Deaf Republic*. *Word and Text – A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*, 12, 95–109. DOI: <https://10.51865/JLSL.2022.07>
- Molnar, H.L. (2010). *Under a red sky: Memoir of a childhood in communist Romania*. New York: Frances Foster Book/ Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Morar, I. T. (2013). *Negru și roșu* [Black and red]. Iași: Polirom.
- Moscovici, S. (1999). *Cronica anilor risipiți* [The chronicle of the vanished years]. Iași: Polirom.
- Mozes K. & Buccieri, L.R. (2011). *Surviving the Angel of Death: The true story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz*. Terre Haute: Tanglewood.
- Mózes, T. (2005). *Staying human through the Holocaust* (A. Hercz et al., Trans. & Eds) Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press. English translation: T. Mózes (1995). *Decalog însângerat*. București, Editura Ara.
- Neagoe, L. (2016). Drumul spre Iad: Evreii din România de la emancipare la Holocaust [The way to hell: The Jews from Romania from emancipation to the Holocaust]. *Holocaust: Studii și cercetări*, VIII. 1(9), 115–121.
- Novac, A. (1997). *The beautiful days of my youth: My six months in Auschwitz and Plaszow* (G.L. Newman, Trans.; M. Goldenberg, Pref. & notes). New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Pagis, D. (1970). *Gilgul* [The transformation]. Ramat Gan: Masadah.
- Pagis, D. (1989). Written in pencil in the sealed railway-car. In S. Mitchell (Trans.), *The selected poetry of Dan Pagis* (p. 29). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Palty, S. (1992). *Evrei, treceți Nistrul!* [Jews, cross the Dniester!]. București: Curtea Veche.
- Paolino, F. (2013). *Una vita: Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924–1942)* [A life: Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924–1942)]. Trento: Edizioni del Faro.
- Patterson, D. (2002). Emil Dorian (1893–1986). In D. Patterson, A.L. Berger & S. Cargas (Eds), *Encyclopedia of Holocaust literature* (pp. 42–43). Westport, Connecticut and London: Oryx Press.
- Petreu, M. (2009). *Diavolul și ucenicul său: Nae Ionescu – Mihail Sebastian* [The devil and his disciple: Nae Ionescu – Mihail Sebastian]. Iași: Polirom.

- Proca, A. (2017, August 31–September 6). Țara din afara cadrului [The country outside the camera]. *Dilema Veche*. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/film/articol/tara-din-afara-cadrului>
- Ramras-Rauch, G. (1994). *Aharon Appelfeld: The Holocaust and beyond*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ramras-Rauch, G. (2002). Dan Pagis (1930–1956). In D. Patterson, A.L. Berger & S. Cargas (Eds), *Encyclopedia of Holocaust literature* (pp. 145–146). Westport, Connecticut and London: Oryx Press.
- Romașcanu, D. (2019, April 29). The catcher in the sand. *Dan Romașcanu's Blog*. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://romascanu.net/tema-holocaustului-in-filmul-romanesc/>
- Rosen, M. (1991). *Primejdii, încercări, miracole. Povestea șef-rabinului Dr. Moses Rosen* [Dangers, trials, miracles: The story of chief-rabbi Dr. Moses Rosen]. București: Hasefer.
- Rozen, M. (2004). *Holocaust sub guvernarea Antonescu, Date istorice și statistice privind evreii din România, în perioada 1940–1944* [The Holocaust under Antonescu's Government, historical and statistic data concerning the Jews in Romania in 1940–1944] (2nd, rev. ed.). București: AERVH.
- Safran, A. (1987). *Resisting the storm: Romania, 1940–1947: Memoirs* (J. Ancel, Ed. & Annot.). Jerusalem: Yad Vashem.
- Schobel, L., & Lică-Mașala, M. (2002). *Am fost la Auschwitz deținutul A-13221* [I was inmate A-13221 in Auschwitz: A conversation with Leopold Schobel]. Pitești: Editura Lică.
- Schwefelberg, A. (2000). *Amintirile unui intelectual evreu din România* [Memories of a Jewish intellectual from Romania]. București: Hasefer.
- Sebastian, M. (2000). *De două mii de ani... Cum am devenit huligan* (N. Ionescu, Pref.). București: Hasefer. (Original work published 1934). English translation: M. Sebastian. (2016). *For two thousand years* (P. Ó Ceallaigh, Trans.; M. Mazower, Foreword). New York: Other Press.
- Sebastian, M. (1996). *Jurnal, 1935–1944* (G. Omăt, Ed.; L. Volovici, Pref.). București: Humanitas. English translation: Sebastian, M. (2000). *Journal, 1935–1944: The fascist years* (P. Camiller, Trans.; R. Ioanid, Intro. & Notes). Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- Sebastian, M. (2024). *Jurnal francez 17 ianuarie 1930 – 14 ianuarie 1931. Text integral* [French diary 17 January 1930 – 14 January 1931: Full text] (A. Oprescu & T. Dumitru, Eds & Annot.; M. Idel, Foreword; T. Dumitru, Afterword). Sibiu: Editura Universității „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu.
- Simpson Geroe, S. (2006). *The silence of parents*. Fithian Press.
- Simpson Geroe, S. (2009). *Treasures and pleasures*. Lulu.com.
- Solomon, A. (2016). *Reprezentări ale memoriei în filmul documentar* [Representations of memory in the documentary film]. București: Polirom.
- Sontag, S. (2004). *Regarding the pain of others*. New York: Picador. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

- Spargo, R.C. & Ehrenreich, R. M. (Eds). (2009). *After representation? The Holocaust, literature, and culture*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Șafran, A. (1996). *Un tăciune smuls flăcărilor: Comunitatea evreiască din România 1939–1947: Memorii* [A canker snatched from the fire: The Jewish community from Romania 1939–1947: Memories]. București: Hasefer.
- Ștefănescu, C. (1968). *Mihail Sebastian*. București: Editura Tineretului.
- Taloș, M. (2019). *Undeva în Transilvania* [Somewhere in Transylvania]. București: Rao.
- Țiu, I. (2024). Memoria Holocaustului în societatea contemporană: Studiu de caz: introducerea disciplinei Istoria evreilor. Holocaustul în planul-cadru pentru liceu [The memory of the Holocaust in contemporary society: Case study: Introduction of the discipline History of the Jews: The Holocaust into the high school curriculum]. *Polis: Revistă de Științe Politice*, XII.1(43), 99–113.
- Vancu, R. (2023a). *Kaddish*. Bistrița: Casa de Editură Max Blecher.
- Vancu, R. (2023b). On-Topic cu Radu Vancu, Radu Vancu despre *Kaddish* [On-Topic with Radu Vancu, Radu Vancu about *Kaddish*]. *Revista Cultura*. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://revistacultura.ro/radu-vancu-despre-kaddish/>
- Vlasopolos, A. (2000). *No return address: A memoir of displacement*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Volovici, L. (2001). Dosar Mihail Sebastian [The Mihail Sebastian file]. *Apostrof*, 12(5), 132.
- Weissberg, L. (2001). In plain sight. In B. Zelizer (Ed.), *Visual culture and the Holocaust* (pp. 13–27). London: The Athlone Press.
- Wiesel, E. (1975). For some measure of humility. *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*, 5(100), 314–315.
- Wiesel, E. (1996, June 29). Interview for Academy of Achievement. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/wie0int-3>
- Wiesel, E. (2006). *Night*. In Wiesel, E. *The night trilogy* (M. Wiesel, Trans.). New York: Hill and Wang. 1–134 (Original works published 1958, 1960, 1961)
- Wolosky, S. (2001). The lyric, history, and the avant-garde: Theorizing Paul Celan. *Poetics Today*, 22(3), 651–668.
- Zăicescu, L. (2007). *Cu trenul expres spre moarte* [With the express train towards death]. București: Editura Institutului Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România “Elie Wiesel.”

Filmography

- Balazs, R. (2023). *Souvenirs de Iasi* [Memories of Iași].
- Brega, O. (2019). *Masacrul de acasă* [The massacre from home].
- Cernăianu, F. (1996). *Destinul Mareșalului* [The Marshal's fate]. Studioul nr. 4 Profilm.

- Gabrea, R. (2001). *Struma* [The goiter]. Antena-Group; Intact Advertising – Newspaper, FM Radio, Magazine, TV Advertisement.
- Gabrea, R. (2009). *Călătoria lui Gruber* [Gruber's journey]. Uj Budapest Filmstudio.
- Ghilașcu, N. (2012). *Persecuțiile din Basarabia* [The persecutions in Bessarabia]. Centrul Național al Romilor din Moldova Romani Glinda, Chișinău.
- Ghilașcu, N. (Director & Producer). (2016). *Cursed years in Transnistria*.
- Ghilașcu, N. & Ene, S. (2013). *Prigoana din Basarabia* [The exile from Bessarabia]. Centrul Național al Romilor din Moldova Romani Glinda, Chișinău.
- Iepan, F. (2013). *Odessa*. Asociația DocuMentor.
- Jude, R. (2016). *Inimi cicatrizate* [Scarred hearts]. HiFilm.
- Jude, R. (2017). *Țara moartă* [The dead nation]. HiFilm.
- Jude, R. (2018). „Îmi este indiferent dacă în istorie vom intra ca barbari” [“I Don't Care If We Go down in History as Barbarians”]. HiFilm.
- Jude, R. (2018). *Cele două execuții ale mareșalului* [The Marshal's two executions]. HiFilm.
- Jude, R. & Cioflâncă, A. (2020). *Ieșirea trenurilor din gară* [The exit of the trains]. microFILM; Nomada.solo.
- Jude, R. & Cioflâncă, A. (2022). *Amintiri de pe Frontul de Est* [Memories from the Eastern Front]. Microfilm.
- Maftsir, B. (2016). *Beyond the Nistru*. Zvi Shefy Productions.
- Mihăileanu, R. (1998). *Train de vie* [Train of life, tragicomedy]. Noé Productions; Raphael Films.
- Nicolaescu, S. (1994). *Oglinda: Începutul adevărului* [The Mirror: The beginning of truth]. Star Film.
- Pugh, C. & Hercules, B. (2005). *Forgiving Dr. Mengele*. First Run Features.
- Ștefan, O. (2016). *Fragments of a life*. The Future of Memory.
- Ștefan, O. (2017). *Daniel Spoerri: The wild child of Yassy*. The Future of Memory. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <https://www.thefutureofmemory.ro/en/movies>
- Ștefan, O. (2017). *My Illusions*. The Future of Memory.
- Ștefan, O. (2019). *Gesturi de rezistență* [Gestures of resistance]. The Future of Memory, in collaboration with Bratislava Policy Institute and Post Belum.
- Ștefan, O. (2022). *Vapniarka: The camp of death*. The Future of Memory.

Anthropology

SMALL RELIGIOUS IMAGES AS INSTRUMENTS OF SOCIAL
INTERACTION
AN ANALYSIS OF HOLY CARDS BASED ON A CĂPLENI
COLLECTION¹

Mária SZIKSZAI

Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania

e-mail: maria@szikszaimaria.ro

Abstract

This study analyzes a collection of 245 small holy cards preserved in a private collection in Căpleni (Romania). The primary aim is to explore the origins, functions, and connections of these holy cards with local religious societies. By focusing on the personal inscriptions and messages on these images, the research seeks to uncover how they were used and how they contributed to shaping interpersonal relationships. The methodology involves categorizing the items based on their usage occasions and the nature of their inscriptions, prioritizing qualitative aspects. The study employs theoretical frameworks such as the concepts of social objects and object biographies, to interpret the functions and social significance of the images. The findings reveal that these small religious images served not only devotional purposes but also acted as social catalysts that facilitated the maintenance and reinforcement of relationships within the community. The gifting and exchange of holy cards were embedded in social interactions, often accompanied by personal messages that documented and strengthened social bonds. These practices contributed to the reproduction of social capital by continuously reaffirming mutual recognition and obligations among community members. In conclusion, the study highlights the multifaceted roles of small devotional images as instruments of both personal piety and social connectivity. The analysis underscores the importance of considering the social life of objects to fully appreciate their cultural and anthropological significance within a given community.

Keywords: holy cards; interpersonal relationships; object biographies; religious images; social objects.

The objective of my study is to present and analyze a collection of small, paper-printed religious images preserved in a private collection in Satu Mare County.² In the course of this study, I aim to explore the origins, function, and connection of the collection's pieces to local religious societies, and to demonstrate how these materials contribute to a deeper understanding of the history of ethnographic objects and reveal aspects of religious life in Căpleni in the 20th century. The collectors and users of the materials under study were members of the Hungarian-speaking communities of Swabian origin in the 20th century. Furthermore, I will discuss how these small religious images participated in shaping interpersonal relationships. For this, I have

¹ Article History: Received: 25.12.2024. Accepted: 03.02.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

² I discovered the collection of small devotional images alongside a larger collection of documents during fieldwork in Căpleni (Satu Mare County, Romania) in 2013. Initially, it was unclear that these holy cards, stored separately, were distinct from the larger archive of 2,400 records. For the detailed analysis of this document collection, see Szikszai 2023.

primarily focused on the personal notes appearing on these prints, through which I aim to determine the function of these images of private devotion during the time of their use.

1. The Origin of the Material Examined

The material discussed in this study consists of 245 small, paper-printed religious images.³ I discovered these items in Căpleni in 2013, among the paper-based records stored in the attic of the parish, deemed old by the local community. Based on the inscriptions on the pages, it is assumed that most elements of the collection were assembled by Jenő Gajdos, known by his Franciscan name, P. Vince (1926–1986)⁴ (hereafter referred to as Vince Gajdos). However, certain pieces extend beyond Vince Gajdos's lifetime. Given that the collection includes items that originated well before his birth, it can be surmised that he added the devotional images and commemorative sheets he received alongside materials collected by others.

The gifting of such devotional image collections is also documented in the scholarly literature. Zoltán Szilárdfy began his own collection following a similar event and then published this collection (Szilárdfy, 1997, p. 7), and a similar collection practice is reported by another duo of authors, Diana George and Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori (George & Salvatori, 2008, pp. 257, 259). Some museums and university libraries hold extensive collections of small devotional images.⁵

2. The Development of Small Religious Images in Private Devotion in the Region

In this region, the origin of religious images used in private devotion dates back to the 13th century, when they were painted on paper or parchment in monasteries (Csukovits, 2018, p. 20). These images were primarily distributed by pilgrimage sites, serving not only a sacred function but also promoting the pilgrimage locations. Believers attached them to various places, such as walls, furniture, or clothing, for protection (Csukovits, 2018, pp. 20-21). Ethnographic research indicates that religious images only became visible in Hungarian peasant homes from the 18th century onwards (Csilléry, 1991, p. 30). The genre of small, paper-printed devotional images in Hungarian scholarship was most prominently showcased by Zoltán Szilárdfy, who published a detailed catalogue of these in two volumes, accompanied by a brief historical overview (Szilárdfy, 1995; Szilárdfy, 1997). In these volumes, the author systematically organized and published the small devotional images in his possession, reinforcing his interpretation of these images exclusively as minor graphic art pieces. In the introduction to his published catalogue, Szilárdfy explains that his collection was originally based on items owned by family members, which he received as gifts, to which he added items he collected himself (Szilárdfy, 1997, p. 7). We will see that a similar process occurred in the

³ In this study, the term holy cards refers to small cards featuring religious images, not consecrated ones. I apply the definition of holy cards as “small printed cards containing pious sentiments or depicting popular religious figures. Widely distributed after the advent of printing, the cards are used as mementos of religious events, to foster a particular devotion, or as a means of remembrance, e.g., for a deceased person.” (Richard P. McBrien, general editor, *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, cited in George & Salvatori, 2008, p. 251).

⁴ Jenő Gajdos, P. Vince, was ordained in 1956. He was a monastic priest. He first served as an assistant priest in Dej (Cluj County, Romania), then in Gârbou (Sălaj County, Romania), and from 1958 onward, he was a parish priest in Iojib (Satu Mare County, Romania). In 1968, he began his service in Căpleni, where he remained until his death in 1986 (Ilyés, 2006, p. 319). In the study, the abbreviation “P.” preceding male names stands for “Pater,” which is the title and form of address for an ordained priest in clerical monastic communities. Similarly, the “M.” before the names of nuns stands for “Mater,” which is the title and form of address for the superior general and choir sisters in female monastic orders.

⁵ For example, the University of Dayton has a collection of over 18,000 small devotional images (source: [University of Dayton Archives] (<https://archivescatalog.udayton.edu/repositories/2/resources/92>, accessed 19.10.2024), while the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum in Budapest holds an 11,000-piece collection from a private collector (Szacsavay, 2000, p. 411).

collection discussed in this study: the owner added pieces he received or collected to those from an earlier collection.

An intriguing perspective comes from the research of Éva Knapp and Gábor Tüskés, who interpret image usage from the standpoint of emblematics.⁶ In this perspective, they discuss emblematic biographies of saints, illustrations in miracle books, graphic illustrations in society publications, illustrations appearing in 18th-century religious chapbooks, and finally, single-sheet peasant woodcuts from the 18th and 19th centuries (Knapp & Tüskés 2004). The approach adopted by the authors in the aforementioned research is primarily iconographic, cultural-historical, and emblematic rather than ethnographic or anthropological. They do not address the usage and function of the images, the practices formed around them, or the values transmitted by these practices. My study employs the anthropological view and examines the cultural values transmitted by these practices: it focuses on the inscriptions and messages visible on small religious images, drawing conclusions from these about when, by whom, and how these images were used, as well as what role these images held in daily life.

3. Holy Cards in Folk Religious Practice

Diana George and Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori's study (2008) highlights that holy images are not merely religious objects but physical manifestations of everyday religious practice, playing a vital role in preserving personal and communal memory related to faith. George and Salvatori's research revealed that in the communities they observed, these sacred cards were not just religious objects; they played a variety of roles in everyday life. They were often given as school rewards for winning spelling competitions, completing religious tasks or even minor acts of service. The authors add that they were also found to serve as a communication tool, with teachers, students, parents and friends writing personal messages on the blank backs. In addition, people kept them in books, purses or pinned to their clothes, used them as personal reminders of faith and as a source of comfort, and often reached for them in times of need (George & Salvatori, 2008, pp. 256-257). They point out that these items, although occasionally regulated by the Catholic Church hierarchy, remained popular among believers because they provided tools to make religious practice tangible (George & Salvatori, 2008, pp. 252-253). The authors also emphasize in their research that religious images uniquely bridge the gap between official theological discourse and folk religious experiences. As part of visual literacy, these images support the daily practice of religious faith, which is often focused not on theological depth but rather on the physical expression of faith (George & Salvatori, 2008, pp. 254-255). The authors also noted that the study of small devotional images presupposes the researcher's access to private collections.

Hungarian ethnographic research emphasizes that visual representations have played and continue to play an important role in Catholic communities in deepening individual and communal religious life, educating the faithful, and supporting their spiritual development (S. Laczkovits, 1991, p. 44). Believers acquired these religious images inexpensively at

⁶ "Az emblematika mint szintetizáló művészet a képzőművészet és az irodalom rendszerébe ágyazott, a kép és a szöveg által együttesen meghatározott, tömeges mértékben előállított, terjesztett és használt kifejezési forma. (...) Az emblematika az európai művészeti hagyomány ikonográfiai közhelyeinek gyűjteménye, amelyben az antik, középkori és reneszánsz szimbólumrendszerekből származó elemeket a hagyomány tekintélye hitelesíti. Az emléképek egy széles körben ismert ikonográfiai nyelv részét alkotják. Túlnyomó többségük jelentése kulturálisan meghatározott, és egy kialakult befogadási konvenciórendszerre épít." (Knapp & Tüskés, 2004, p. 16). [Emblematics, as a synthesizing art, is embedded within the systems of visual arts and literature, forming an expressive mode jointly determined by image and text, produced, disseminated, and utilized on a mass scale. (...) Emblematics constitutes a collection of iconographic commonplaces within the European artistic tradition, where elements derived from antique, medieval, and Renaissance symbolic systems are authenticated by the authority of tradition. Emblematic images are part of a widely recognized iconographic language. The vast majority of their meanings are culturally determined and rely on an established system of reception conventions. – our translation.]

pilgrimages and fairs, and they were also distributed by itinerant vendors (S. Laczkovits, 1991, p. 44).⁷

A significant role in the dissemination of small holy images was played by Catholic societies. Popular graphics, often described in scholarly literature as images for private devotion, were connected to their activities, with some depictions likely circulated through their networks. This is why it is worthwhile to document which religious societies operated in a given region. Some research suggests that between 1563 and 1780, approximately 1,300 religious societies may have been active in historical Hungary (Knapp & Tüskés, 2004, p. 155). Among these societies, those with a higher level of organization also distributed printed publications. According to the estimates of Éva Knapp and Gábor Tüskés, this was characteristic of about ten percent of all societies (Knapp & Tüskés, 2004, p. 155).

In Căpleni, a vibrant catholic society life existed at the beginning of the 20th century. In a previous study, I uncovered traces of the presence and operation of religious societies in the village (Szikszai, 2013, pp. 145-156). This reconstruction was made possible partly through interviews with informants and partly from data in the parish archives. I identified the following societies and associations, noting the years corresponding to the data available:

1. Perpetual Rosary Society, 1894–1992
2. Third Order of St. Francis, continuously from the second half of the 20th century to the 21st century
3. St. Anthony of Padua Prayer Union, 1902
4. Society of the Living Stations of the Cross, 1909
5. Society of the Holy Scapular, 1912
6. Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1914
7. Society of Mary (Brotherhood), around 1927
8. Army of the Holy Cross, 1927, 1928
9. Association of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, 1932
10. Catholic Young Men's Society, 1932
11. Catholic Agricultural Youth Society (KALOT), 1941
12. Altar Society, 1948
13. Society of St. Joseph, 2013 (Szikszai, 2013, p. 153).

The spread of small religious images and the establishment of their use are largely linked to these religious associations and the religious practices that were organized around them.

4. Presentation of Data

As mentioned, the material forming the basis of this study was likely collected by Vince Gajdos, but it includes images from periods before his lifetime, as well as images gifted by others to others during his lifetime. The collection consists of sheets of various sizes and functions, with the common characteristic that, with a few exceptions, they are all paper-based. The exceptions include, for instance, a sheet with a textile cutout glued onto it and another case where dried and flattened plants were affixed to paper sheets.

In examining the collection, I attempted to categorize the items based on the occasions and ways they were used. Below, I describe these items according to these categories,

⁷ It is known that in many cases, individuals of peasant origin not only sold the images at fairs but also produced them themselves. For example, according to a study by Károly Kós, in the first half of the 20th century, in certain Transylvanian settlements peasant-origin individuals played a significant role in icon painting (Nicula), or they were actively engaged in woodcut production (Hășdate). These religious-themed works were not only used within their own communities but were also sold, becoming part of the local economy. Kós emphasizes that these activities were not merely crafts but played an important role in the visual culture of folk religiosity. (Kós, 1994, pp. 13–15).

prioritizing qualitative aspects. In some categories, multiple images belong together; in these cases, the description addresses them collectively. Some categories include fewer images, but those with handwritten inscriptions providing valuable information are treated with particular attention. In every case, I placed the emphasis on images carrying personal messages, because from these one can outline the use of the images and the social relationships that accompanied them. The handwritten texts on the pictures are in Hungarian. Below I publish both the original and the English translation of each quoted text.

4.1 Mass Commemoratives

These holy cards mark pivotal moments in the life of a priest, such as the first Mass following ordination and the 25th, 50th, and 60th anniversaries of this first Mass, commemorated as silver, golden, and diamond jubilees, respectively, with devotional image-bearing commemorative sheets.

The first occasion when a young priest prepared and distributed such sheets to the congregation and acquaintances was his first Mass after ordination. After celebrating his first Mass, the young priest distributed these commemorative sheets to the faithful and fellow priests attending the event. This collection contains 35 commemorative sheets prepared for first Mass occasions.

One interesting aspect of the collection is that it includes two shared commemorative holy cards. In 1957, a joint commemorative holy card was prepared by 18 graduates ordained as priests in April 1957. The card listed the names of all 18 graduates alongside their birthplaces. These 18 priests came from three dioceses, as indicated on the sheet: 12 were from the Diocese of Transylvania, four from the Diocese of Satu Mare, and two from the Diocese of Timișoara. There are two copies of this card in the collection; one bears a handwritten note: “Szeretettel P. Vincének” [With love to P. Vince] though the gift giver remains unknown. Among the names listed is that of a graduate from Căpleni: József Ludescher. József Ludescher (1929–1989) was born in Căpleni and was ordained on April 28, 1957 (Ilyés, 2006, p. 353).

In the same year, in November 1957, five Franciscans were also ordained as priests; they, too, had a shared card displaying the names of the five newly ordained priests. It appears, however, that some also made individual cards in addition to the shared commemorative card, as a name appearing on the common list (eg., Sándor Bakos) is also found on a separate commemorative card. The aforementioned József Ludescher also had a personal commemorative card, which is included in the collection.

Some chose not to have a commemorative card printed; instead, they wrote the customary information for a first Mass by hand on the back of a photograph reproducing an illustration of a saint. This included their chosen motto, the location and date of ordination, the location and date of the first Mass, and, of course, their own name.

The distribution of first Mass cards by year is as follows: 1905: 1; 1929: 2; 1934: 1; 1936: 2; 1937: 1; 1938: 1; 1941: 1; 1943: 1; 1948: 1; 1956: 4; 1957: 13; 1958: 1; 1960: 1; 1961: 1; 1965: 2; 1966: 1; 1967: 1. As we can see, the number of cards increased in the mid-1950s, partly because Vince Gajdos was ordained in 1956, giving him connections with students from those years.

Among the jubilee commemorative cards in the collection, 15 were created for silver jubilees, seven for golden jubilees, and one for a diamond jubilee.

It is worth pausing to examine the collection’s oldest card, dating back to 1905. This commemorative card marks the first Mass of the Franciscan priest P. Béla Stefanovics, held in Trnava (Slovakia). The card is notable for its four gray patches in the corners of the text side, evidence of it having been affixed somewhere at some point with the image facing outward. Presumably, someone was drawn to the illustration on the front, an admittedly beautiful

depiction of Christ, and decided to paste it somewhere. Later, the card was included in the collection with these patches still visible. There is no other card in the collection of such age. This card likely survived precisely because someone admired the illustration adorning one side and, disregarding its original function, attached or glued it somewhere. Thus, the card underwent a change of function: for a period, it ceased to serve as a reminder of P. Béla Stefanovics's first Mass, with the illustration side instead taking on primary significance, functioning solely as an image.

The collection also includes a commemorative card without a name inscribed. In the place where the name would typically appear, it simply reads "IN MEMORIAM", with the years "1930-1955" beneath it. At the top of the card, a Latin motto is inscribed. The image on the reverse side shows an altar with a chalice, along with a Latin motto and an inscription indicating that the card was created for a 25-year jubilee. Someone manually added "P. Benedek Fidél ofm" to the text side. Thus, the card commemorates the 25th anniversary of the ordination of the Franciscan priest P. Fidél Benedek, who modestly refrained from printing his name, likely opting instead to handwrite it on each card, as was done on this one. This group also includes two other commemorative cards prepared in memory of Franciscan vows: one from 1957 for P. Benedek Stelli and another from 1947 for Regináld Antal.

We have seen that some pieces in the collection originate from the first half of the 20th century. It is conceivable that the early 20th-century collection of Franciscans serving in the Căpleni monastery was later expanded by Father Vince Gajdos, the Franciscan pastor. I assume that upon taking charge of the parish, he discovered previously collected holy cards among the documents and began adding his own to this collection. Eventually, these documents were considered "old" and relegated to the attic, from where they subsequently got to the researcher.

4.2. Commemoration of the Deceased

Small memorial cards were also created in remembrance of the deceased, featuring a saint's image on one side and textual information about the deceased on the other. In the collection, there are memorial cards for nine clergymen, two young individuals (one a theologian and the other a monk), and one layperson.

The memorial card for the layperson is particularly interesting: it requests prayers for Mrs. Gyuláné Czapik, widow, who was born in Szeged in 1855 and passed away in Budapest in 1938. Below the information, a prayer in Hungarian is inscribed, with a photograph of the elderly woman above it. The other side displays an image of the Sacred Heart of Christ with a Latin motto below. A brown stain on the textual side suggests that this card, like others, may have been affixed somewhere, indicating a preference for displaying the image side. This may explain how the memorial card of a layperson, born in 1855 and living far from Căpleni, ended up preserved in this collection in Căpleni.

Another photographic memorial card requests prayers for P. Leonard Maria Bello, a Franciscan who passed away in Rome in 1944.⁸ The card was printed at the Bunavetura Press⁹, with P. Fidél Benedek, a Franciscan friar, listed as the publisher responsible. The collection also includes a photographic memorial card for Ottokár Prohászka, a bishop from Hungary who passed away in 1927; a card for P. Fülöp Einholz, a Franciscan priest who died in Călugăreni (Mureș County) in 1934 (Figure 1); Fr. Rókus Miks (1856-1937), who passed away in Dej (Cluj County); a photographic memorial card for Archbishop Lajos Szmrecsányi (1851-

⁸ Fr. Bello Maria Leonardo was born on August 16, 1882, in Motta di Livenza, Italy. From 1933 to 1944, he held the position of Minister General of the Franciscan Order. For a brief biography, see Cecchin, 2023, p. 76.

⁹ St. Bonaventure's Book Printing House operated in Cluj-Napoca between 1906 and 1948, and was the printing house of the Franciscan Order of Transylvania. (Diós & Viczián, 2007)
<https://lexikon.katolikus.hu/S/Szent%20Bonaventura%20Könyvnyomda.html> (15. 11. 2024)

1943); a card for Fr. Elek Szilveszter Papp (1879-1956), who died in Estelnic (Covasna County); and a photographic memorial card for P. Valérián Rendes (1873-1940).



Figure 1. Memorial card of P. Fülöp Einholz, front and back of the image

There are also memorial cards for two young individuals in the collection: two copies of the card for Brother Antal Bálint Miklóssy, a Franciscan who died “in the service of the homeland” at the age of 25 (though no birth or death years are mentioned), and the card for Béla Ambrus Vitek, a third-year theologian who passed away in Radna (Arad County) in 1934.

Although it is not in the genre of holy image memorial cards, it is worth mentioning a memorial funeral among the cards in the collection. An A4-sized sheet folded into quarters, with the details printed on one side. A broad black border around the edges indicates that it is a funeral notice. The text announces the passing of landowner Ferenc Gurzó in Lăzarea (Harghita County) in 1944 at the age of 61. Among the mourners listed is P. Anaklét Gurzó, a Franciscan friar, suggesting a family connection, which may explain how the card ended up with the Franciscans in Căpleni. P. Anaklét Gurzó was a well-known Franciscan figure in Transilvania, likely a relative of the deceased.

4.3. Holy Images with Personal Messages

This category includes 36 small holy images in the collection, along with two documents that, although not holy images, contain personal messages and were grouped with the holy images by the collectors. Therefore, I regard them as documents classified by their users within this larger category. Below, I present a selection from this category, chosen to highlight how these images were used in different situations based on the notes and texts on them.

4.3.1

One side of a commemorative card is a color print depicting Christ, with a stylized heart encircled by a crown of thorns visible in the center of His chest. Christ slightly raises His hands, with a reading stand in front of Him bearing an open book. Beside it there lies a cushion with a ring into which a large and a smaller lily are inserted. The stand is fully covered by a veil. The following text is inscribed at the side: “Da mihi animas caetera tolle tibi.” [Give me souls, take the rest for Yourself.]¹⁰

¹⁰ The motto “Da mihi animas caetera tolle tibi” belonged to Saint John Bosco (1815–1888), founder of the Salesian Society.

On the reverse side, a small printer's mark appears, with no location or date. A handwritten text reads as follows:

"Lelkicsokor
Szentmise..... 30
Szentáldozás.....30
Szentségimádás.....30
Rózsafüzér.....30
Lelkiáldozás.....150
Önmehtagadás.....150
Röpima..... 3000
Hálás szeretettel lelkiatyánknak.
M. Melánia, Margit és Vali."
[Spiritual Bouquet
Masses.....30
Holy Communion.....30
Eucharistic Adoration.....30
Rosaries.....30
Spiritual Communions.....150
Acts of Self-Denial.....150
Short Prayers.....3000
With grateful love to our spiritual father,
M. Melánia, Margit, and Vali]

This handwritten note lacks a date. Signed by three individuals, the attentive observer will immediately notice that each item is accompanied by a number divisible by three. The devotions listed on the card were formulated as a gift, and the signatories intended to participate equally in fulfilling them. In this case, the commemorative card functioned as a gift offering made by three people. (Figure 2)

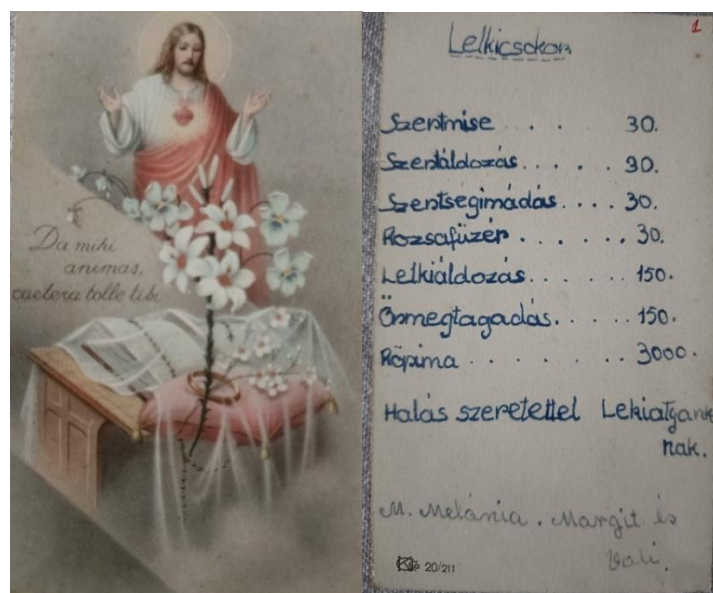


Figure 2. Holy card, the front and back of the card

4.3.2

A small, black-and-white reproduced image depicting the face of Virgin Mary. The handwritten text on the reverse reads:

“Fleisz Éva
víz kereszti
Hittan Emlék 1961”
[Éva Fleisz
Epiphany
Catechism Memory 1961.]

This indicates that the card was likely given to Éva Fleisz on the occasion of Epiphany, perhaps as a gift from her catechism teacher, and it served as a memory of this 1961 Epiphany. It is not clear how this small image ended up in the collection.

4.3.3

The next commemorative card shows a black-and-white reproduced photograph of the Virgin Mary on one side. Mary is depicted within an oval frame, surrounded by allegorical elements such as a wreath of lilies, hearts, and stars. The inscription reads: “Regina sine labe originali concepta ora pro nobis” (Translation: “Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us”).

The handwritten text on the reverse reads:

“Édes Annikám!
Köszönjük, hogy szeretettel átengedted a kis hajlékot nekünk lelki megújulásunk céljára.
A Jó Isten áldjon védelmezzon az élet minden körülményei között ezt kívánjuk lelki
testvéreid.
1950. IX. 13.
M. Eterna
M. Petronella n.
M. Nikoletta n.
M. Kanradilla n.
M. Apollónia n.”

[Dear Annika!
Thank you for lovingly allowing us the small shelter for our spiritual renewal. May the
Good Lord bless and protect you in all circumstances of life, from your spiritual siblings,
1950. IX. 13.
M. Eterna¹¹
M. Petronella n¹²
M. Nikoletta n.
M. Kanradilla n.¹³
M. Apollonia n.]

This holy card was a gift from the signatories to the addressee, who provided them lodging for a retreat. The signatories and the addressee, who refer to each other as spiritual siblings, were likely members of the same order. The date reveals more: by 1950, religious orders were officially banned in Romania, having been outlawed the previous year. However,

¹¹ Eterna Papp served as a housekeeper in the Sancta Maria Institute in Sfântu Gheorghe from 1940–1942 before relocating to Cluj. (https://epa.oszk.hu/03300/03308/00004/pdf/EPA03308_acta_siculica_2010_481_496.pdf), accessed 12.10.2024).

¹² Mária Gáspár, aka Sister Petronella (1930–2012) recounted her life story in the journal *Keresztény Szó* 16, no. 9 (September 2005) (<https://epa.oszk.hu/00900/00939/00066/text.htm#7>), accessed 12.10.2024).

¹³ Berta Gergely, aka Sister Konradilla was born in 1920 and passed away in 2014 at the age of 94, in her 75th year of religious life. She worked as a nurse from 1944–1975, mainly in Târgu Mureş. (<https://ersekseg.ro/hu/content/elhunyt-gergely-berta-m-konradilla-ferencrendi-nover>), accessed 12.10.2024).

these nuns continued their activities discreetly.¹⁴ This small card not only attests to this fact but also to the organization of and participation in retreats even after the ban. I found information on three of the five signatories.

In this instance, the commemorative card serves as a token of gratitude: a few nuns received lodging from someone and, as a gesture of thanks, gifted her this holy card with a personal message. (Figure 3)



Figure 3. Holy card, the front and back of the card

4.3.4

A stylized heart encircled by a crown of thorns radiates light beams, each ending with another crown of thorns. Below it, a chalice is flanked by two white doves, one poised to drink. Beneath the chalice there are flowers and a bunch of grapes; to the left there stands a stalk of wheat, and on the right, a parchment on the table bears a Latin inscription.

The parchment reads: “Gustite et videte que suavis est dominus,”¹⁵ translated as [Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.]

The following text, handwritten in blue ink, appears on the reverse side:

“Édes jó Istenem, ne engedj meghalnom, mielőtt a szegénység, tisztaság, engedelmisség és a szegények szolgálata fogadalmát le nem tettem. Édes Szüzanyám! nyerd ki nekem égi Jegyesemmel való eljegyzésem napjára a keresztségi ártatlanság sz. kegymét. Sz. Vince jó atyám esd ki számomra az alázatosság az egyszerűség és igazi szeretet szellemét.”

¹⁴ My research shows that during the period of the ban on religious orders in Romania between 1949 and 1989, Catholic nuns in this region expected to continue to be considered nuns by their narrow community and their families, and behaved accordingly: they kept their name as nuns until their death, signed their letters with that name, and expected others to address them as such in correspondence. They participated in spiritual exercises and generally lived according to this value system, for example by not marrying, attending church regularly, etc. Catholic priest Mihály Tyukodi had two nun sisters with whom he corresponded for several decades, addressing them in his letters by the names they had taken upon entering their religious order. Mihály’s youngest sister, who had applied to join a convent in the 1940s but ultimately did not take her vows and later got married, was still celebrating her nun’s name day even in the 1990s (Szikszai, 2020, p. 30). A significant shift occurred in 1995 when one of Mihály Tyukodi’s oldest sisters passed away. From that point on, in letters to others, he referred to her by her civil name. His sister had used her nun name for 60 years and her civil given name for only 23 years. Yet, deep in Mihály’s heart, she remained by her childhood name, and her death also signified that she was no longer a member of the order, allowing him to return to the name they had used in their childhood (Szikszai, 2020, p. 44).

¹⁵ The phrase “Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus” is a slightly modified title from a work by Domenico Mazzocchi (1592-1665), originally “Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus” (Mazzocchi, Domenico, 1664).

[My dear God, do not let me die before I have taken the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and service to the poor. Sweet Virgin Mother! On the day of my betrothal to my heavenly Spouse, grant me the holy grace of baptismal innocence. Good Father St. Vincent, obtain for me the spirit of humility, simplicity, and true love.]

Below, in different handwritings, the following text is added:

“Ezüstmisém
emlékére
Tarzicia nővértől”

[In memory of my silver jubilee
from Sister Tarzicia.]

The initial text, written in calligraphic, neat script, contrasts significantly with the informal style of the second inscription. The two texts were clearly written by different individuals, as indicated by both the handwriting and the content: the person who wrote the upper text likely did not write the lower. The latter mentions a silver jubilee, but this case diverges from the usual situation where a priest gifts a holy card to attendees for his own jubilee. Here, the text reads not only “in memory of my silver jubilee” but also adds “from Sister Tarzicia.” Due to the mention of the silver jubilee, we must assume a priest as the second person involved, who celebrated his silver jubilee. Therefore, our main characters are a priest and Sister Tarzicia. The text at the top was written by the nun, who likely donated the commemorative card as a gift to the priest. The text at the bottom was added by the priest: since the giver did not sign her own name after the text, the priest, who received the image as a gift, probably noted under the prayer who had given him the commemorative card and on what occasion. This is why there are two different handwritings on the image.

Following this line of thought, St. Vincent is mentioned in the upper text. It is known that one of the Căpleni parish priests was P. Vince Gajdos (1926-1986), so he may have been the priest for whom the card was gifted for his silver jubilee. If so, the timing of the gift can also be established. Vince Gajdos was ordained in 1956, making his silver jubilee in 1981. This card was likely gifted by Sister Tarzicia to him in 1981. In this case, the commemorative card functioned as a gift: a nun gifted a holy card with a handwritten prayer to a priest celebrating his 25th ordination anniversary.

4.3.5

A depiction of Christ with shoulder-length hair ending in curls. He gazes upward, displaying a stylized heart at the center of his chest with his hands. Above the heart there is a cross surrounded by a crown of thorns. Behind Christ there is a climbing rose, with a single lily in front of him.

On the back, a handwritten message reads:

“Főtisztelendő P. Szentey (?) Gellért úrnak a sok-sok jószágért.
1943. jun. 25-én. Friedrich Róza.”

[To the Reverend Father Gellért Szentey (?) for his many kindnesses.
June 25, 1943. Róza Friedrich.]

Róza Friedrich gifted this commemorative card to a priest in gratitude for his kindness in 1943. Although the individuals could not be identified, it is evident that commemorative cards featuring holy images were also used to recognize positive moral qualities.

4.3.6

A black-and-white image depicts two figures, visible from the waist up. The taller figure, likely Christ, holds a chalice and a host, looking downward at a kneeling figure with clasped hands and eyes fixed on the host. Below, on a white background, black uppercase text reads, “Ego sum panis vitae,” meaning [I am the bread of life.] In smaller print, publishing details are noted: “Kunstanstalten Joseph Muller, G. m. b. H., Dresden.”

On the back, a handwritten message reads:

“Jutkának születés napjára nagy-nagy szeretettel K. Jutka Isten éltesse! 1940. nov. 22.” [To Jutka on her birthday with much love, Jutka K. May God bless you! November 22, 1940.]

The holy card was likely given as a birthday gift by a close acquaintance, perhaps a friend, in 1940, meaning that in this case, the small holy card served as a birthday present.

4.3.7

A black-and-white image shows the child Jesus, holding a globe with a small cross in one hand and raising the other in blessing, with a decorative aura around His head.

The reverse side bears a handwritten message:

“Drága Juditkámnak születésnapjára minden jót kívánunk. Sok-sok szeretettel
Nicolette
Kundi
Orsi
1940. XII. 22.”

[To my dear Juditka, best wishes for your birthday. With much love,
Nicolette, Kundi, Orsi
December 22, 1940.]

It is likely that both this and the previous card were intended for the same person’s birthday, though there may be an error in the month noted, as it seems improbable that her birthday was celebrated exactly one month apart. The previous card records November 22, while this one lists December 22. The latter is more likely incorrect due to the use of Roman numerals, where such mistakes are more common. In this case, the small picture was a birthday present from three women. (Figure 4)



Figure 4. Holy card, the front and back of the card

4.3.8

A black-and-white image of Mary with the child Jesus, framed by climbing roses. On the back, a handwritten prayer reads:

“Legyen Uram Irántad való szeretetem az, hogy visszavonhatatlanul és tökéletesen a Te szent akaratodat teljesítem. Szeretettel,
M. Jolánda n. 1940. V. 18.”

[May my love for You, O Lord, be such that I fulfill Your holy will irrevocably and completely. With love,
Sister M. Jolanda, May 18, 1940.]

The message is largely a prayer, with the final lines indicating that Sister Jolanda gifted this small image to someone in 1940 as a sign of affection. In this case, the holy card is a gift lovingly presented by the signee.

4.3.9

A black-and-white image likely depicts Saint Cecilia at a piano, with a kneeling, praying angel beside her. Five additional angel figures watch from above. The back reads:

“Sz. Cecillia őrizze meg lelked harmóniáját egész életeden át. Szeretettel Magduska,
Szárhegy, 1935. VII. 2.”

[May St. Cecilia preserve the harmony of your soul throughout your life. With love,
Magduska, Szárhegy, July 2, 1935.]

The Franciscan monastery in Lázarea (Szárhegy or Gyergyószárhegy in Hungarian, Harghita County) has existed since 1642. This holy card, gifted by a woman named Magduska in 1935, was likely intended for a Franciscan who later brought it to Câpleni, where there was also a Franciscan monastery.

4.3.10

A holy card depicting an unnamed, kneeling, praying female saint. On the reverse side, the following dedication appears:

“3 szentmise
3 szentáldozás
5 rózsafüzér
10 röpima
3 jócselekedett
Kedves névnapjára a jó Isten áldását, kegyelmét!
S. Erzsike néni
Dés, 1961, VII. 19.”

[3 Holy Masses
3 Communions
5 Rosaries
10 short prayers
3 good deeds
God’s blessings and grace on your nameday!
Aunt S. Erzsike, Dés, July 19, 1961.]

The list of devotions suggests that the card’s giver would perform these prayers and acts as a gift for the recipient’s nameday. Although the recipient’s name is not given, it can be

inferred from the date. Between 1737 and 1969, the feast day of Saint Vincent de Paul was on July 19, which, in the 1961 calendar, was the day of Saint Vincent. P. Vince Gajdos was indeed serving in Dej (Dés in Hungarian, Cluj County) at that time, so we can reasonably assume that this card and the devotional practices listed on it were gifted to him for his name day. Another example of how small holy cards could also function as name day gifts.

4.3.11

A black-and-white illustration of a standing female saint, with a handwritten dedication on the back:

“Juditkámnek az utolsó fête de classe emlékére sok-sok szeretettel Marianne. 1942. III. 25.” [To my Juditka, in memory of the last *fête de classe*, with much love, Marianne, March 25, 1942.]

The dedication suggests that classmates gave each other this card to commemorate their last class celebration, likely marking their final year together. This example shows that commemorative cards could serve as mementos not only for religious occasions but also for secular events or social gatherings, marking moments shared between two individuals. (Figure 5)

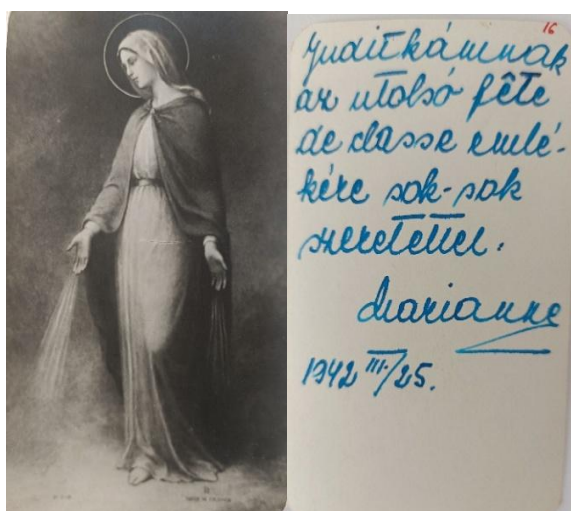


Figure 5. Holy card, the front and back of the card

4.3.12

Finally, a handmade commemorative item is worth mentioning, similar in function to the preceding examples. Composed of 15 identical-size cardboard sheets, possibly cut from a drawing book, these pages are punched on the left side and tied together with string to be flipped like a book. A green pencil frame was drawn around each page, approximately 2mm from the edge. The first page reads, “Csíksomlyói emlék” [Souvenir from Csíksomlyó]. (Figure 6)

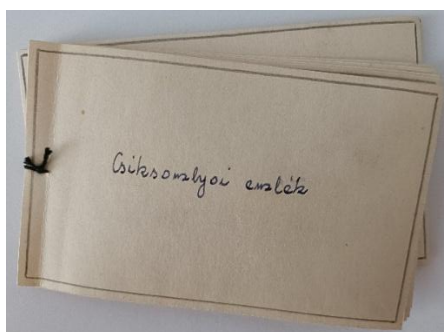


Figure 6. Commemorative card.

Inside, the dedication “Szeretettel Magdus” [With love, Magdus] appears. Each subsequent page bears a handwritten title in the upper left corner: “I. Állomás”, “II. Állomás” “XIV. Állomás” [I. Station, II. Station, ... XIV. Station), with each page centered around a different pressed plant. The arrangement recalls the Stations of the Cross, likely visited during the Pentecost pilgrimage¹⁶ to Șumuleu Ciuc (Csíksomlyó in Hungarian, Harghita County), and brings this memory to life with its herbarium-like arrangement. The booklet was placed in a blue, folded paper envelope and remained intact. (Figure 7)

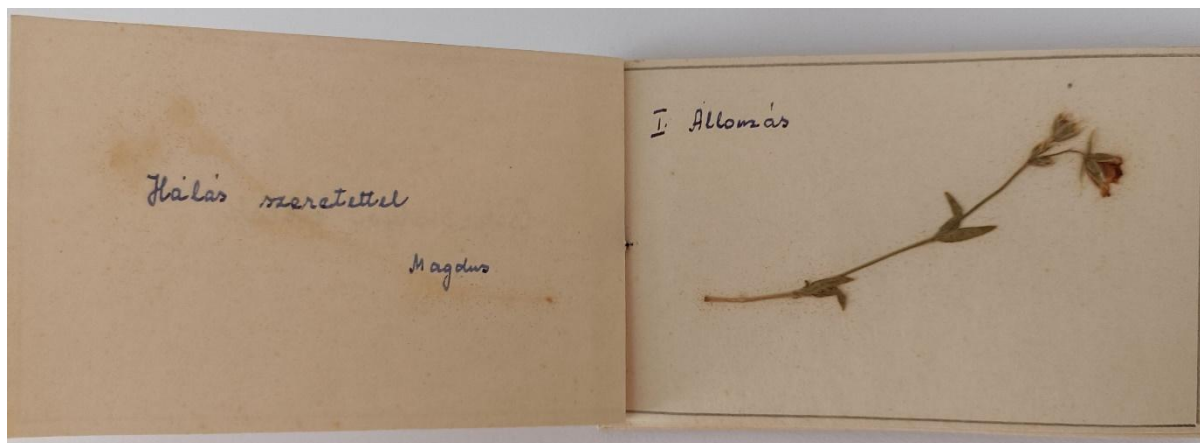


Figure 7. Commemorative card.

We cannot determine from this piece on what occasion and to whom the compilation was gifted by a woman named Magdus, but in section 4.3.9, we observed that a person of the same name¹⁷ gifted a holy card on Saint Vincent’s Day. There, we inferred that the recipient might have been P. Vince Gajdos, who was serving in Dej at the time and later moved to Căpleni. Perhaps this compilation is also from the same person; the shared name at least suggests this, as does the fact that her gift arrived in Căpleni along with the previous one.

4.4. The Rosary Society Mysteries

The Rosary Society’s small devotional cards represent a distinct category in this collection, featuring monthly illustrations with accompanying messages known as “mysteries.”¹⁸ These cards are regularly exchanged among society members, who would recite the prayers depicted on the images. Based on their style and numbering, the collection includes two incomplete series and a third complete series.

5. Other Paper-Based Items in the Collection

The items highlighted so far stand out due to their inscriptions and the narratives they reveal. However, the collection includes many additional small devotional images and similar pictures lacking personal messages or notes. Among these, there are numerous German-language images alongside Hungarian ones. There are a total of 46 images featuring a picture on one side and a prayer on the other, of which 18 are identical. These 18 identical images

¹⁶ Șumuleu Ciuc (Harghita County, Romania) is a Catholic pilgrimage site in Romania. For an ethnographic description of the procession, see Mohay 2009, Vass 2010.

¹⁷ Magduska and Magdus are diminutive forms of the name Magda.

¹⁸ The first record of the establishment of the Perpetual Rosary Society in Căpleni dates back to 1894, when the community petitioned for recognition by the Dominican Order. This society was eventually replaced by another, the Living Rosary Society, which incorporated the practice of exchanging devotional cards and became active in Căpleni only in the second half of the 20th century (Szikszai, 2013, pp. 146-147).

depict Pope Pius XII. Below the Pope's image, his brief biographical details are provided: his birth year and the dates of his ordination as a priest, and later as a bishop, cardinal, and pope. On the reverse side of the image, there is a prayer in German. Since the date of his death is not printed on the card, it can be assumed that this image was produced and distributed during his lifetime. Due to its size and structure resembling holy cards, these images were also preserved among the holy cards by the collection owners. I believe that anthropological research must also consider where informants draw genre boundaries, and in this case, it becomes apparent that these boundaries do not align precisely with the formal limits of the small holy card genre itself.

Thus, we encounter the category of genre-bordering items within this collection. While the collection primarily includes small devotional images, it also holds pieces that lie at the boundary of the genre. Their religious content and similar dimensions led collectors to place them among the devotional images, though they do not entirely fit the genre of small devotional cards.

An example is a printed sheet with an image of Christ holding a book, a halo above His head on one side, and German text on the reverse, partially formatted as a fillable form, completed in ink. The printed text instructs the reader that, in the event of an accident, illness, or hospitalization, the cardholder would like a priest to be summoned immediately. The handwritten details record the name and address of a woman in Germany. The data does not reveal how this card entered the collection.

Additionally, the collection includes a handwritten poem in Hungarian entitled "Óh, ha én is Péter leszek..." [Oh, if only I could become a Father...] on an old notebook page. The two-stanza poem describes a young boy's aspiration to become a monk from a young age, wearing a brown robe as he has seen. The author, Márka Lajos, signed it as follows: "Írta: Márka Lajos VII. osztályos. Sok szeretettel P. Gajdos Vincének Lajcsi. Szatmárnémeti, 1957. I. 21." [Written by Lajos Márka, 7th grade. With much love, Lajcsi, to P. Vince Gajdos. Satu Mare, January 21, 1957]. The page, folded into quarters, is the same size as the average holy card.

Another small note preserved among the holy images is a notebook page bearing a letter dated October 1, 1966, in Debrecen, addressed to Vince, presumably P. Vince Gajdos. The letter's writer mentions settling into a new place, enjoying schoolwork with two children's choirs (one with 80 members, another with 150), and expresses a lingering fondness for Cluj. The letter ends with a request for remembrance, promising the same in return. The note card is the same size as the average holy cards.

In both cases above – the poem handwritten by a young boy and the letter – the items were either of similar size to typical holy cards or folded to that size. They were personal mementos, and this personal significance, along with their size, is what aligns them with the previously highlighted category of images bearing messages and well-wishes. This similarity explains their inclusion in this collection.

6. Analysis: Social Objects, Object Histories, Social Capital

6.1. Ethnographic literature has long been concerned with the interpretation of objects. In a 2013 study, Zoltán Fejős, anthropologist and museologist, presented three approaches that, while blending together, distinctly aim to explore this issue (Fejős, 2013, pp. 32–65). One approach views objects as representations of an era (Fejős, 2013, p. 33). This approach attempts to represent an era through objects. The basis of this interpretation is that the objects, groups of objects, collections of objects carry the characteristics of the era in which they were created and used. From the perspective of our analysis, it can be argued that these small devotional images indeed bear the traits of the late 19th century and, primarily, the 20th century: they were

produced on paper and reflect the hallmarks of paper-based culture. They were designed in a printing house, with the appropriate images and texts selected, printed, and then disseminated through ecclesiastical networks until they reached specific recipients. However, these small devotional images also reflect the fact that after 1948, the Romanian authorities made every effort to suppress the activities of churches. As a result, on some occasions, the faithful resorted to improvised solutions, such as handwriting the text on a photograph of a saint's image, when they could not afford to use printing services.

The second approach considers objects as expressions of social categories (Fejős, 2013, p. 40). In the case of the present material, it is evident that men appear predominantly as givers, as most of the small devotional cards were distributed on the occasion of significant milestones in the priestly vocation, such as the first mass and its anniversaries. Female names appear on memorial cards associated with death, birthdays, name days, significant personal events, or instances of expressing gratitude. The data in the collection indicate that in all such cases, the cards were exclusively given by women, to both men and women alike. Thus, male givers are only present when priests distribute cards to commemorate a first mass or its anniversaries, while female givers are associated with personal celebrations or other notable occasions. As for the recipients, no clear gender roles can be discerned; both men and women appear as recipients of these cards.

The social status of the givers is known in only a few cases, as indicated by inscriptions on the small devotional images. During this period, these small devotional images were used at every level of the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy, from the lowest to the highest ranks.

The third approach mentioned by Zoltán Fejős views objects as manifestations of personality (Fejős, 2013, p. 48). Within this framework, the concept of relicization is often referenced, where the value of certain objects derives from their association with specific individuals. In the case of small devotional images, this type of interpretation is relatively rare. Zoltán Szilárdfy mentions that he became an enthusiastic collector himself, proudly noting that his collection initially came from family members (Szilárdfy, 1995). However, in practice, this phenomenon is uncommon. For the small devotional images analyzed in this study, there is no evidence of such behavior, nor have data emerged from the village where the images originate to suggest this interpretation, beyond the fact that inscribed names likely reminded the owner of the giver. However, there is no indication that any of these images were preserved specifically because they were received from someone of personal significance. On the contrary, it seems that the illustration on one side of the image played a more significant role in its preservation and transmission than its origin. This is supported by at least two pieces in the collection, which appear to have been affixed somewhere for the purpose of appreciating the illustration.

Yet, the effort of the creators of these images to design and distribute pieces that aligned with their own taste and conveyed their intended message can also be interpreted as a manifestation of personality. This intent is relatively clear within the collection. Although the collection is not extensive, it is reasonable to assume that the creators carefully selected both the images and texts displayed on the commemorative cards.

6.2. Another concept that I found useful in this research was the concept of the social object. The concept is used across numerous scientific disciplines (Passinsky, 2021; Epstein, 2014; Asl et al., 2013; and others), however, I cannot address this breadth within the current framework, I can only indicate that here I apply the ethnographic interpretation of the concept of the social object. Following Nina Simon, I regard social objects as drivers of experiences embedded in social networks, and in this approach, both objects and experiences become inherently social (Simon, 2010). These objects were not merely household artifacts but came into the possession of individuals through social interactions, valued not only for artistic or

historical qualities but also as stimulants of interaction. According to Nina Simon (2010), social objects allow people to focus their attention on a third thing rather than on each other, which facilitates interpersonal relationships.

The material analyzed in the present study includes objects through which people communicated within the framework of social interactions, assuring one another of their attention and goodwill. Consequently, these objects were not merely items in themselves, nor were they simply mementos; rather, they represented past social interactions and served as tangible evidence of social relationships. These devotional images were not only collected and stored but were also distributed and gifted on specific social occasions and at the end of religious rites. The cards conveyed religious messages through their printed illustrations and, at times, through mottos, prayers, or supplications. Beyond this, however, the messages carried an additional, personal layer. Crucially, in the vast majority of cases, the giver personally approached the recipient to hand over the image. The act of giving was not about the image itself but about establishing a personal connection, often marked by words of greeting, smiles, or other gestures. When distributed after masses, the large number of participants limited personal exchanges, yet such signs of acknowledgment, like nods or brief interactions, remained. On other occasions, however, the act of giving could serve as a pretext for a brief, polite conversation, and in this sense, the images indeed functioned as catalysts for social interactions.

6.3. However, in the course of the research, I found that the social role of small sacred images sometimes goes beyond the notion of a social object, as their role is not limited to provoking social interaction, but extends further: these objects have changed hands and functions several times, they have a history, they have value, and in their constant gifting and exchange, a social exchange value is formed. The interesting aspect of Igor Kopytoff's approach (1986) is that, in describing what he calls the history of things, he also goes into detail about the exchange value of things.

Ethnography has long noted the relevance of the story of museum objects. The foundation of this approach lies in the idea that the object itself is not the only significant factor in museum curation – its history is equally important. Ideally, understanding an object's history should accompany its acquisition, documenting any related narratives.¹⁹

With regard to the holy cards studied here, it is no longer possible to ask former owners about the histories of these objects. Instead, I relied on the personal messages and notes that appear on the cards. As Kopytoff suggests, we can pose questions about objects akin to those asked about people's life stories, such as key moments in the object's life, its changes in status over time, and any significant "eras" that distinguished it from similar objects (Kopytoff, 1986, pp. 66-67). Kopytoff's approach, rooted in commodification, explores how certain cultural prohibitions prevent some items from becoming commodities, as public sale of certain items is culturally or communally restricted (Kopytoff, 1986, p. 75). An object's history can articulate its value within a specific exchange context. Viewed through this lens, these small devotional cards have outlived their first, second, and sometimes even third owners by decades. Their stories likely began with their initial gifting, passing from the first owner to the second, and so on, as they eventually became part of this collection.

The examination of small devotional images benefits from this perspective. Some images followed a simpler trajectory in private devotion: they reached an owner and were used as part of personal worship, often displayed prominently at home (on shelves, in cabinets, framed with other images) or used as bookmarks in books and prayer books, with other items

¹⁹ This approach is primarily associated with museum artifacts but can extend to any collection encountered by cultural researchers.

stored in collection boxes or drawers.²⁰ Other images participated in a broader social cycle: a person acquired an image and later, in a social situation deemed appropriate, felt compelled to make a gesture toward another person. This context could be a first Mass, a jubilee Mass (such as a silver or golden jubilee), a memorial for the deceased, or a secular occasion like a name day, birthday, or even a school celebration. The individual in such a situation reinforced their social role through the act of gifting, incorporating the devotional image as part of this gesture. To personalize and emphasize the social act, they sometimes added a handwritten message to the card.

In the case of the present research, the biography of the objects can only be obtained indirectly: only in a few cases is it indicated on the plates where they were printed, and only in the case of those pieces with personal inscriptions is there any chance of deciphering part of their history. This is why the pages on which messages are written are important. Also worthy of attention are those on which the donor himself did not write a personal message, but the person who received the picture as a gift wrote on it who gave it to him.²¹ As a gesture, this note not only indicates that the person who received the gift wants to remember the person who gave it to him, but also that he wants to be remembered as a participant in the exchange chain.²²

6.4. Another valuable interpretive framework for this material is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital (Bourdieu, 1997, pp. 156-178). Here, the constant maintenance of social relationships is crucial for the reproduction of social capital, which requires ongoing exchanges to reinforce mutual recognition (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 162). Within this framework, social capital represents long-term obligations created and reproduced through reciprocal gifts, favors, and visits. In this collection, commemorative cards received by both priests and laypeople indicate that the exchange paths of these devotional images were bidirectional between clergy and laity. The giving of these cards, therefore, can also be understood as an effort to sustain and reinforce social relationships continuously.

An example from section 4.3.1 illustrates this dynamic. Here, the gift was not only the card as a material object but also the list of devotions handwritten on it, symbolizing the giver's commitment to perform those prayers for the spiritual benefit of the recipient. Miklós Mojzer (1997, pp. 11-13), in his study on the late medieval institution of the altar, describes the Catholic Church's historical efforts to quantify spiritual benefits, measured in terms of temporal remission of sins, which reduced the suffering of souls in purgatory. According to Mojzer, the indulgence system functions as a 'massive communal and individual (and within that, forgiveness) spiritual deposit'²³ (Mojzer, 1997, p. 13). This understanding sheds light on the devotional offerings inscribed on the holy card: the givers offered instruments of indulgence, likely to a priest, as part of the cycle of reciprocal favors and gifts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these small, paper-printed religious images or holy cards served not only religious functions but also as instruments of social connection, aiding in the maintenance and

²⁰ I observed these usage practices in Căpleni during fieldwork, not specifically for this collection but in private collections held by villagers.

²¹ According to Marcel Mauss, "each gift is part of a system of reciprocity in which the honour of giver and recipient are engaged" (Mauss, 2002, p. 16).

²² Participation in the exchange chain in this community was also important in other areas. Even in recent times, what locals call "kaláka", the institution of mutual aid during major works, was still valued and considered important. In Căpleni, the "kaláka" was still in operation in the 1990s, and I have personally collected data showing that during this period, families organized wedding parties on their own, with friends and relatives in the village volunteering hours of work on the days of preparation. The organizing family knew exactly how many hours of work they could count on from each family in the village. Now, in 2024, there is only a tangible trace of this within the extended families in the form of family members even from neighboring villages coming over to help each other with larger jobs.

²³ Original text: "(...) közösségi és egyéni, roppant méretű lelki (és ezen belül bűnbocsánati) bankbetét." (Mojzer, 1997, p. 13)

reinforcement of relationships. The gifting and exchange of these images often prompted direct interactions, allowing the images to become tools for the reproduction of social capital.

Secondly, individual items within the collection passed through multiple owners and functions over time, becoming gifts with social exchange value. These object biographies reflect shifts in their roles within social circulation, providing insights into the context of these interactions.

Lastly, the devotional images carried not only religious content but were enriched with personal messages, documenting and strengthening the relationships between their owners. These notes preserved not only memories but also direct gestures of religious and social significance.

References:

- Asl, H. Z., Iera, A., Atzori, L., & Morabito, G. (2013). How often social objects meet each other? Analysis of the properties of a social network of IoT devices based on real data. *2013 IEEE Global Communications Conference (GLOBECOM)*, Atlanta, GA, USA, 2804–2809. DOI: 10.1109/GLOCOM.2013.6831499.
- Bourdieu, P. (1997). Gazdasági tőke, kulturális tőke, társadalmi tőke [Economic capital, cultural capital, social capital]. In R. Angelusz (Ed.), *A társadalmi rétegződés komponensei* [Components of social stratification] 156–178. Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Cecchin, R. S. (2023). The contribution of Fr. Leonardo Maria Bello to mariology. *Ecce Mater Tua: A Journal of Mariology* Vol. 7, 76-100.
- Csilléri K. (1991). Képek a sarokban [Pictures in the corner]. In E. S. Laczkovits (Ed.), *Népi vallásosság a kárpát-medencében I* [Popular religiosity in the Carpathian Basin I] 30-43. Veszprém: VEAB Néprajzi Munkabizottsága – Caritas Transsylvania.
- Csukovits A. (2018). A népi vallásosság tárgyai megőrzésének jelentősége [The importance of preserving objects of popular religiosity]. *Honsmeret*, 46(4), 20-25.
- Diós, I. (Ed.), & Viczián, J. (Ed.). (2007). *Magyar katolikus lexikon XII. (Seq–Szentl)* [Hungarian Catholic Encyclopedia XII. (Seq–Szentl)]. Budapest: Szent István Társulat.
<https://lexikon.katolikus.hu/S/Szent%20Bonaventura%20Könyvnyomda.html> (15. 11. 2024)
- Epstein, B. (2014). Social objects without intentions. In A. Konzelmann Ziv & H. B. Schmid (Eds.), *Institutions, emotions, and group agents: Contributions to social ontology* (pp. 53–68). New York: Springer.
- Fejős, Z. (2013). Az évszázad és az én világa: Diskurzusok az “egy tárgy” muzeográfiájában [The century and the world of the self: Discourses in the museography of “one object”]. *Néprajzi Látóhatár*, 22(2), 32–65.
- George, D., & Salvatori, M. R. (2008). Holy cards / Immaginete: The extraordinary literacy of vernacular religion. *College Composition and Communication*, 60(2), 250-284.
- Ilyés, Cs., (Ed.). (2006). *A Szatmári Egyházmegye Sematizmusa* [The sematism of the Diocese of Satu Mare]. Szatmárnémeti: Szatmári Római Katolikus Püspökség.

- Knapp É., & Tüskés, G. (2004). *Populáris grafika a 17-18. században* [Popular graphics in the 17th-18th centuries]. Budapest: Balassi
- Kopytoff, I. (1986). The cultural biography of things. In A. Appadurai (Ed.), *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective* (pp. 64–91). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kós, K. (1994). A népi ikonkészítés műhelyei a Mezőségen [The workshops of folk icon making in the Câmpia Transilvaniei]. In E. Zakariás & V. Keszeg (Eds.), *Yearbook of the Kriza János Ethnographic Society* 2., 198–210. Cluj Napoca: Kriza János Ethnographic Society.
- Mauss, M. (2002). *The gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies* (W. D. Halls, Trans.). London: Routledge.
- Mohay T. (2009). *A csíksomlyói pünkösdi búcsújárás: Történet, eredet, hagyomány* [The Pentecostal pilgrimage to Csíksomlyó: History, origin, tradition]. Budapest: Nyitott Könyv – L'Harmattan.
- Mojzer M. (1997). A festő hagyatéka, ahogyan ma látjuk [The painter's legacy as we see it today]. In Á. Mikó & Gy. Poszler (Eds.), *"Magnificat anima mea Dominum" MS Mester Vizitáció-képe és az egykori selmebányai főoltára* [MS Master's Visitation picture and the former main altar of Selmebánya] (pp. 9-25). Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria
- Passinsky, A. (2021). Norm and object: A normative hylomorphic theory of social objects. <https://philpapers.org/archive/PASNAO.pdf> (10. 09. 2024)
- S. Laczkovits E. (1991). Vallásos ábrázolások és feliratok a Közép-Dunántúli paraszti kultúrában [Religious depictions and inscriptions in the peasant culture of Central Transdanubia]. In E. S. Laczkovits (Ed.), *Népi vallásosság a kárpát-medencében I* [Popular religiosity in the Carpathian Basin I] (pp. 44-66). Veszprém: VEAB Néprajzi Munkabizottsága – Caritas Transsylvania
- Simon, N. (2010). *The participatory museum*. Museum 2.0. <https://participatorymuseum.org/chapter4/> (09. 09. 2024)
- Szacsvay É. (2000). Egyházi gyűjtemény [Ecclesiastical Collection]. In Fejős Zoltán (Ed.), *A Néprajzi Múzeum gyűjteményei* [The Collections of the Museum of Ethnography] (pp. 403–432). Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum.
- Szikszai M. (2013). Vallásos társulati élet egy szatmári sváb faluban [Catholic religious societies in a Swabian village in Satu Mare]. In E. Egyed, L. Pakó, & A. Weisz (Eds.), *Certamen I: Előadások a Magyar Tudomány Napján* [Certamen I: Lectures on the Hungarian Science Day] (pp. 145-156). Cluj Napoca: Societatea Muzeului Ardelean.
- Szikszai M. (2020). *Letűnt világok antropológiája és a megismerhetetlen különös szépsége: Szociális kapcsolatháló és kulturális gyakorlat az írógép korszakában* [Anthropology of lost worlds and the peculiar beauty of the unknowable: Social networks and cultural practices in the age of the typewriter]. Cluj Napoca: Societatea Muzeului Ardelean.
- Szikszai M. (2023). *Community networks and cultural practices in twentieth-century Romania: Paper-based cultures in the writings of a Catholic priest*. Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Lexington Books.

- Szilárdfy Z. (1995). *A magánáhitat szentképei a szerző gyűjteményéből I: 17-18. század* [The private devotion holy cards from the author's collection I: 17th-18th centuries]. Szeged: JATE Néprajzi Tanszék.
- Szilárdfy Z. (1997). *A magánáhitat szentképei a szerző gyűjteményéből II: 19-20. század* [The private devotion holy cards from the author's collection II: 19th-20th centuries]. Szeged: JATE Néprajzi Tanszék.
- Vass E. (2010). *A búcsú és a búcsújárás mint rituális dráma* [Pilgrimage and the indulgence as a ritual drama]. Budapest: Lexika Kiadó – MTA Könyvtára.

History

CUSTOMARY LAW OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TIMES

A COMPARATIVE APPROACH AND A FEW SOUTH SLAV, GERMAN, TRANSYLVANIAN SAXON, HUNGARIAN, VLACH AND ROMANIAN ENACTMENTS¹

Ela COSMA

The Romanian Academy, George Barițiu Institute of History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

E-mail : ela_cosma@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study presents a legal historical comparison of various ethnic marked consuetudinary laws from Southeastern and Central Europe during the Middle Ages and early modern history. Such customary laws were enacted in proper codifications specific to the ethnic communities of the South Slavs (Zakon sudnyi ljudem, Serbian and Croatian customary laws”), Germans (Sachsenspiegel, Schwabenspiegel, Magdeburgisches Stadtrecht, Ofner Stadtrecht), Transylvanian Saxons (Codex Altemberger, Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen), Hungarians (Werbőczy István’s Tripartitum), Vlachs (Jus Valachicum in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Herzegovina) and Romanians (Jus Valachicum in South Transylvania). In each of the illustrated cases we specify the emergence and features of the customary laws specific to various Southeast and Central European ethnic communities, the manuscript editions, variants and copies of the original sources, the languages in which they were written, as well as their spread, importance and influence upon the neighbouring ethnic communities. We show that, in spite of the multiethnic cohabitation in Central Europe and the Balkans, the various ethnic consuetudinary laws had a parallel development, while each of the ethnies, social categories, medieval and modern nations involved kept their own ethno-juridical peculiarities.

Keywords: customary law; enactments; comparative legal history; Central Europe; Southeast Europe.

Introduction

By means of the following case studies, representing several codifications of the consuetudinary laws specific to the medieval and early modern South Slavs, Germans, Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians, Vlachs and Romanians, we aim to present a comparative perspective of a legal historical process comprising wide areas of Central and Southeastern Europe, as well as a multi-century time span. Such ethnic marked enactments of customary laws speak about the needs and interests of various ethnic communities (often presented in historical sources as distinct social categories) during the medieval and modern history, as well as of their goal to acquire *via juris* and to preserve for centuries their customary rights and privileges.

¹ Article History: Received: 06.01.2025. Accepted: 06.02.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

Our comparative approach of legal history regarding the spread and enactments of the customary laws in Southeastern and Central Europe is important and relevant, as it rejects the recurrent stereotype of strictly oral, unwritten, indistinct and loose, somehow underground and ineffective consuetudinary regulations. On the contrary, pragmatical value and specialized functions determined and characterized each of the following case studies. Thus, legal cross-influences could not replace the specific consuetudinary prescriptions adopted by the distinct ethnic communities, but were exerted conjunctively with them.²

1. Defining Customary law, Traditions and Customs

What is *customary law*? Searching for an answer to this question, we notice that the less formal and more informal definitions of the consuetudinary or customary law generally include ‘a set of laws based on the traditions, customs, or norms of a local community’. Customary law still is applied in many countries, often in parallel with civil, common, and religious legal systems. Its content and features have varied in space and time, according to the changes in local customs. It has been underlined that the use of customary law has been more prevalent in countries with weak formal justice systems. ‘Customary law is often - but not always - unwritten. It is based on long-standing traditions, customs, and rules that a community accepts as binding.’³

Over the course of history, the oral prescriptions of customary law were more than once codified in legal documents and codes. Moreover, they were also sanctioned and granted by the official temporal authorities. In such cases we can speak about proper *enactments of customary law*.

The term itself is used especially by the recent English-language scholarship, which offers a strong theoretical conceptualization of legal history and a large comparative perspective of the past and present legal systems. Harold Berman (1983), John Henry Merryman (1985), H. Patrick Glenn (1997, pp. 613-620; 2004; 2004, pp. 7-20) and Alan Watson (2004, pp. 1-6), David Ibbetson (2015, pp. 1-11) a.o. intensively dealt with *comparative law, custom, legal cultures, legal traditions*, but they defined the same concepts in different ways identifying different meanings, as Judit Beke-Martos noted. The latter demonstrated, in her excellent study (2021), the lack of consensus in defining notions like *custom* and *tradition*, but also the conceptual elements common to them both. To her credit, the Hungarian author debates the heated, controversial and ‘ambiguous relationship’ between *custom* and *tradition*, starting and ending with definitions of common sense, however without neglecting the theoretical edifice created by the previously mentioned scholars. In brief, according to Judit Beke-Martos, “*tradition* is normative information, which is transmitted over time horizontally and vertically and that people willingly adhere to, while *custom* is factual information, which members of a given group of society create and maintain and which, if supported by state authority, becomes binding law” (Beke-Martos, pp. 5-25).

Less inclined towards theory, the legal historians preoccupied by customary law systems specific to Central and Southeast Europe have a quite different approach, which is rather inductive not deductive, seldom comparative and often monoethnic, little conceptualized but applied and very concrete, by showing the rich facets of each customary law separately.

² An analysis of the legal cross-influences between ethnic communities of the Romanians and Transylvanian Saxons is detailed in my forthcoming article presenting the *Interferences between the Romanian and German Customary Law in South Transylvania. Case Study: The Romanian-Saxon Peace Convention of Insula Christiana, 13 January 1383*.

³ *Customary Law, Defining Customary Law – How is Customary Law Different?*, ed. by the Federal Judicial Center (USA), Judiciaries Worldwide. A Resource on Comparative Judicial Practice. Retrieved February 3, 2025, from, <https://judiciariesworldwide.fjc.gov/customary-law>.

Following the historiography dedicated to the medieval and early modern customary law of the South Slavs, Germans and Transylvanian Saxons, Hungarians, Vlachs and Romanians, we see how emphasis is laid on identifying and describing particular legal historical customs and documents, and also codes of law that are specific to certain ethnic communities. Theoretical studies of comparative legal history of Central and Southeast European customary law are quite rare, except for a few relevant research projects completed through publications, reflecting *German Law Books of the Middle Ages* (Ulrich Dieter Oppitz, 1991-1993), *Custom and Law in Central Europe* (ed. Martin Rady, 2003), *The Laws and Customs of Medieval Croatia and Slavonia* (Damir Karbić and Marija Karbić, 2013), *Saxon-Magdeburg Law in Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania* (Inge Billy, Gönczi Katalin, Marija Lazar and Wieland Carls, 2012-2020)⁴.

The oldest medieval legal manuscripts are handwritten either on parchment paper sheets or in book form called *codex*. The most significant enactments of customary law are usually named by the title of the manuscript, *codex* or printing (*Sachsenspiegel*, *Schwabenspiegel*, *Tripartitum*), sometimes bearing the name of the manuscript owner (*Codex Altemberger*), a geographical, local or place name (*Meydepurgisches recht* and *dy rechte von der Ygla*, *Statutes of Făgăraș*). Most often enactments of customary law are defined as such even from the title by the ethnic denomination which makes the specific difference (*Liber Sclavorum*, *Zipser Willkhür*, *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transilvania* or *Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, *Statuta Valachorum* or *Vlašog zakona*). Yet sometimes several expressions of an ethnic community's enacted customary law are denominated with the ethnic name given by foreigners (*Jus Valachicum*) or with the self-name of the respective ethnic community (*Deutsches Recht*).

That is why, in order to reach a comparative view and synthetical conclusions regarding Central and Southeast European customary law, a descriptive and analytical approach is necessary to begin with, as we will show next

2. The Consuetudinary Law of the South Slavs

It is reflected in a range of legal prescriptions. The oldest of them were codified in *Zakón súdnyi liúdem*, possibly written in the second half of the 9th century by the Saints Cyril and Methodius and preserved only in later copies from the 13th-14th centuries. This *Zakón* was largely used over time and space (covering the Balkans and, apparently, Great Moravia). *Liber Sclavorum qui dicitur Methodius*, mentioned in the chronicle *Ljetopis Popa Dukljanina* (after 1150, preserved in translations from 1350-1450), was recently identified as another (yet not discovered) writing of Saint Methodius. Compiled under Byzantine influence of *Nomocananoi*, but adapted to the South Slavic world and adopted by customary use, these codes include regulations of civil and criminal law, forming a mix of secular (*νόμοι*) and ecclesiastical prescriptions (*κανόνες*).

Zakón súdnyi liúdem (Law for Judging the People) is the oldest extant Slavic code of laws, composed of 32 articles including prescriptions of civil and criminal law. It was written around the year 850, however it is preserved only in later copies from the 13th-14th centuries.

⁴ Inge Billy, Wieland Carls, Gönczi Katalin (2012). *Sächsisch-magdeburgisches Recht in Polen. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Rechts und seiner Sprache* [Saxon-Magdeburg Law in Poland: Analyses regarding the history of the law and its language]. Berlin: De Gruyter. Gönczi Katalin, Wieland Carls (2014). *Sächsisch-magdeburgisches Recht in Ungarn und Rumänien. Autonomie und Rechtstransfer im Donau- und Karpatenraum* [Saxon-Magdeburg Law in Hungary and Romania: Autonomy and law transfer in the Danube-Carpathian area]. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. Inge Billy, Wieland Carls, Gönczi Katalin, Marija Lazar (2020). *Sächsisch-magdeburgisches Recht in Tschechien und in der Slowakei* [Saxon-Magdeburg Law in Czechia and Slovakia]. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Best known is its manuscript from Russia (1280). Burgmann shows that the provenance of the code, which was compiled in the second half of the 9th century, is still uncertain (Burgmann, 1998, col. 470).

Based on linguistic arguments, most of the researchers consider Moravia to be its place of origin and the Saints Cyril and Methodius its authors; others support the idea of *Zakón*'s Bulgarian origin, in the time of Tsar Boris I the Christianizer (865), while some historians state that it was used even in Great Moravia (that included South Pannonia), too. In his critical and comparative approach, Marko Petrak proves that *Zakón súdnyi liúdem* mainly contains a translation from *Εκλογή τῶν νόμων* (Selection of laws), "the most important collection of civil law after Justinian" (circa 741), a few prescriptions from the Western Roman law and three articles (on pagan sacrifice, oath and witnesses) from the Old Testament Mosaic law (Petrak, 2018, pp. 213-224). *Zakón* was doubtlessly completed and adapted to the Slavic realities.

Liber Sclavorum qui dicitur Methodius (Book of the Slavs called Methodius) is mentioned in a famous chronicle of the South Slavs, *Ljetopis Popa Dukljanina* (Chronicle of the priest of Dioclea), written in Latin, under the title *Regnum Sclavorum* (Reign of Slavs), in the second half of the 12th century, either by bishop Gregorius (Grgur) in Dioclea (Duklja), or anonymously in Antivari (Bar, in Montenegro). It was translated into Croatian as *Hrvatska kronika* (Croatian chronicle) between 1350-1450. Chapter 9 of *Regnum Sclavorum* describes the accomplishments of King Svetopelek, ruler of Slavonia (Petrak, 2018, p. 214)⁵, who created institutions, as well as "many laws and good customs" (*multas leges et bonos mores*). In this chapter a "Slavic book called *Methodius*" (*librum Sclavorum qui dicitur Methodius*) is recorded (Petrak, 2018, p. 216). Petrak identifies *Liber Sclavorum* with Saint Methodius's *Nomocanon*, another writing mentioned only in chronicles, whose original was never discovered. In any case, *Liber Sclavorum qui dicitur Methodius* seems to be a genuine work of Saint Methodius, and not the translation of the Byzantine *Nomocanon*⁶, that was made from Greek into Slavonic by the same author of the Cyrillic alphabet (Petrak, 2018, pp. 216-223).

3. The Croatian and Dalmatian Municipal Statutes

An astonishing variety of statutes and codes of law is revealed in medieval and early modern Croatia. They were compiled, copied, reworded, sanctioned and reconfirmed during the 13th-18th centuries.

A lucky situation facilitating the researchers' worldwide access to Croatian historical sources and analyses is, in my opinion, due to several factors: a) ample and complete collections of South Slavic documents from Croatian archives (like the two series of *Monumenta Slavorum Meridionalium*)⁷ elaborated at the end of the 19th century by Radoslav Lopašić and his successors⁸; b) contemporary historians following the path opened by great legal historian Lujo Margetić in the 20th century (see in English precisely: Margetić, 2008, p. 150-165); c) last but not least, plenty of recent studies published in today's *lingua franca*

⁵ Svetopelek's Kingdom of Slavonia comprised a territory formed of: 1. *Maritima*, including *White Croatia* or *Inferior Dalmatia* and *Croatia Rubra* (Red Croatia) or *Superior Dalmatia*; 2. *Transmontana*, made up of Bosnia and Rascia (Raška, Serbia).

⁶ A *Nomocanon* was composed of secular laws (*νόμοι*) and of ecclesiastical or canon laws (*κανόνες*).

⁷ The first series of *Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium* (Monuments Pertaining to the History of the South Slavs) was published in 43 volumes between 1868-1918. The second series, which deals precisely with *Monumenta Historico-Juridica Slavorum Meridionalium* (Historical Juridical Monuments of the South Slavs), was published between 1877-1979 in 13 volumes of legal documents concerning the history of Croatia. Both series were edited under the aegis of the South Slavic Academy of Science and Arts.

⁸ Radoslav Lopašić (1835-1893), corresponding member of the South Slavic Academy of Science, initiated the scientific editing of Croatia's medieval and early modern sources, in *Spomenici Hrvatske krajine 1478-1780* (Sources Regarding the History of the Croatian Military Border 1478-1780), 3 vol., Zagreb, 1884-1889; *Hrvatski urbani 1436-1700* (Croatian Urbaries 1436-1700), Zagreb, 1894.

(English) by young authors (Birin, 2014, pp. 455-468; Galović, 2019, pp. 869-897; Karbić, 2003, pp. 37-45; Petrak, 2018, pp. 213-224; Ravančić, 2014, pp. 189-207), thus overcoming the language barrier, as well as the isolation and ignorance usually suffered by Southeast-European languages and cultures.

Proper codes of customary laws, written in vernacular Croatian language for the use of the Croatian small and great nobility, are: the *Vinodolski zbornik* (1288), enacting privileges for the military *iobagiones castri*; the statute of Krk or Vrbnik (1388) - both with Glagolitic letters; the *New Statute of Poljice* (1440) - in Bosnian Cyrillic, stressing the juridical autonomy of the noblemen; *Statut lige kotara ninskog* (circa 1460-1490), an acknowledgement of the rights of the rural community (*universitas villarum*) of the Nin district. In Latin were written: the statute of the town of Senj (1388), *Statutum Ligae Zadar* (circa 1450), including privileges for the rural community of the district. Italian language was used for: the compilations of *Vranski zbornik* (1454), that granted rights to the military small noblemen called *feudatari* of the Vrana castle; the 16th century legal code of Novigrad (today Novi Vinodolski), apparently a translation of a 15th century Latin original, which recorded general customary laws specific to Croatia. A few consuetudinary items were also included in the statutes of several towns from the Dalmatian coast and from Croatian islands of the Adriatic Sea (14th-16th centuries).

Vinodolski zbornik (Collection of Vinodol) represents the oldest Croatian legal code which enacted the privileges of the *iobagiones castri*, a military category of "castle warriors" defending the region. It was written in vernacular Croatian in 1288, during the power transfer from the authority of the Hungarian king to that of the Croatian great nobility (Karbić, 2003, p. 38; Galović, 2019, pp. 869-872). Being of particular importance for the history of Croatia, after the first edition of Antun Mažuranić from 1843 (Mažuranić, 1843, pp. 52-83), it was re-edited several times and translated into Italian, German, English (see: Margetić, 1998). The statute of the island of Krk (Vrbnik) of 1388 is chronologically the second *codex* compiled in vernacular Croatian with Glagolitic script. At the same time (1388), the statute of Senj was written in Latin (Galović, 2019, p. 869).

Poljički statut, the law of the Dalmatian Poljica region, although apparently codified in the 14th century, is preserved in form of the *New Statute of Poljice* (1440 or 1444). Shortly before the beginning of the Venetian rule, it was written down in vernacular Croatian by the local authorities for the Croatian noblemen, in order to stress the region's juridical autonomy. Until the fall of the Venetian republic (1797), this code of laws was continuously revised and used as the main legal document in the region, sharing a similar reputation as the *Tripartitum* in Hungary and North Croatia (Karbić, 2003, p. 41).

Vranski zbornik (Collection of Vrana) from 1454, in Italian, included the statutes of another privileged military category, the so-called *feudatari* of the Vrana castle. They belonged to the small nobility of different origins: Croatian, Italian, even Hungarian, who served in the garrison of Vrana and were rewarded with lands for their military service. In the middle of the 15th century, too, *Statutum Ligae Zadar* was compiled in Latin and re-edited a century later. *Ligae* were allied districts in the time when Venetia ruled the districts of the Dalmatian towns and parts of the Croatian counties from the *hinterland* of Zadar. The enactments of Vrana and Zadar reflect a larger process of codifications initiated by Venetia in the Croatian territories it was ruling. *Statut liga kotara ninskog* was elaborated in vernacular Croatian circa 1460-1490, however its original language cannot be determined, as the statute from the town of Nin is preserved only in an 18th century copy. The statutes of Zadar and Nin differ from the rest of Croatian customary laws by the fact that they had in view not certain privileged social groups, but entire rural communities (*universitates villarum*) from the districts pertaining to the mentioned towns. Another law code of Novigrad (today Novi Vinodolski), that of Poljica, has a more general character. Made by the small noblemen from the homonym district (part of the

Luka county, which came in 1409 under Venetian domination together with the towns Zadar and Nin, and with the Vrana castle), it aimed to record both the customary laws of Croatia and of the region between Nin and Knin. The extant Italian compilation dating from the 16th century seems to have been preceded by a 15th century original written in Latin.

A great number of towns situated on the Dalmatian coast or in Adriatic islands created their own legal statutes during the 14th-16th centuries. Damir Karbić considers that, unlike the 13th century code of Vinodol, which is a direct expression of the Croatian consuetudinary law, only elements of Croatian customary can be found in the 14th century communal statutes of Krk, Senj, Skradin, Šibenik, Brač and Hvar (Karbić, 2003, p. 40, footnote 18).

Ante Birin takes into account a different chronology of the urban enactments in Croatia, based on the oldest preserved legal codes of the towns Korčula (1265) and Ragusa (1272, today Dubrovnik), followed by the 14th century town statutes of Zadar and Brač (1305), Lastovo (1310), Split (1312), Trogir (1322), Šibenik, Skradin, Rab and Kotor (ante 1325), Hvar (1331), Mljet (1345), Poreč (1363), Pag (1372) and Senj (1388). The preserved urban statutes of Novigrad (1402, today Novi Vinodolski), Pula (1431), Budva (1442) are dated in the 15th century and those of Umag (1528) and Rijeka (1530) in the 16th century (Birin, 2014, pp. 459-460).

In part III of Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* of 1517⁹, the compilers of the Croatian consuetudinary laws reproduced the local customs and juridical practices, used in parallel with older Byzantine legal sources (Justinian, Gratian). Just as parts I and II of *Tripartitum* represented the interests of the Hungarian noblemen, part III supported the prescriptions favorable to the Croatian nobility. Damir Karbić detected some differences between the Hungarian and Croatian customs; for instance, the latter did not admit the institution of the daughter's quarter and preferred dowry to dower, while the legal practice of the two countries was even more distinct, as the cases of 1361, 1375 (confronting the Croatian law with the Sicilian and Hungarian laws) show (Karbić, 2003, pp. 43-45).

The coexistence and complementarity of various customary laws extant in medieval Croatia, and not their hierarchy or competition for priority, is confirmed in the historical geographical survey realised by Damir Karbić and Marija Karbić. *The Laws and Customs of Medieval Croatia and Slavonia* are presented by the mentioned authors according to the distinct regions of present-day Croatia: Dalmatia (15 statutes), Istria (13 statutes), historical Croatia (2 statutes and 5 law codes), Kaverner region (4 statutes and 2 law codes), Slavonia (Zagreb Golden Bull of 1242, a privilege, a brotherhood renewal, a dietal decision). Each enactment is dated, described in its content, explained according to the extant manuscripts and editions, provided with the relevant literature. It is a brief, but very useful and quasi exhaustive *Guide to the Extant Sources*, a good model to be augmented (by Croatian researchers) and followed (by foreigners), as the quoted authors consider (Karbić & Karbić, 2013).

4. The German Town Law

The German town law (*Deutsches Stadtrecht*) was widespread in medieval Central and Eastern Europe by means of several legal codes: *Sachsenspiegel* (Saxon Mirror), the oldest and most important law book of the German Middle Ages, compiled by Eike von Repgow (1220-1235); *Schwabenspiegel* (Swabian Mirror) of 1275; the commercial urban law of *Magdeburgisches Stadtrecht* (1188-1294); the town privileges of the Buda town law (*Ofner Stadrecht*) from the 14th-15th centuries (Oppitz, vol. I-II, 1991; Oppitz, vol. III/1-3, 1993).

Metaphorically compared to a mirror, where medieval man could distinguish between good and bad, *Sachsenspiegel* and *Schwabenspiegel* were descriptive, not prescriptive codes,

⁹ See infra about the *Tripartitum* by Werbőczy István.

recording, not imposing certain old laws and juridical practices. They transposed into writing the legal principles established in the vernacular language (and not in Latin, the language of scholars), making a clear division in *Landrecht* and *Lehnrecht* (Droege, 1969; Möhlmann, 2002, pp. 5-7).

So, both *Sachsen-* and *Schwabenspiegel* included collections of prescriptions regarding especially the land law (*Landrecht*) and the feudal law (*Lehnrecht*), which nowadays correspond to common (private) and public law. The *Landrecht*, as the law of the land and of the free peasants (*jus terrae* or *regionis consuetudo*), gradually turned into the territorial and political law of a German Land (*ius provinciae* or *statuta civitatis*).

Sachsenspiegel, for instance, comprised three books of German consuetudinary law (*Landrecht*), a book of feudal law (*Lehnrecht*), prescriptions of canonic and Roman law (Bielitz, 1823, p. 4). It enumerated and described: a) the 7 vassalic stages which established the access of the land's people to the class of knights; b) numerous prescriptions regarding the laws of succession (*Erbrecht*) and of family (*familienrechtliche Bestimmungen*); c) the organization of the courts of instance, trials of material criminal law (*materielles Strafrecht*); d) the general law (*allgemeines Recht*), called "land peace" (*Landfrieden*); e) a great number of prescriptions with respect to the highest dignitaries of the medieval German Empire (king, prince, count, etc.), the monarch's right upon the assets with no heirs (*erbloses Gut*), the military conscription (*Heeresaufgebot*) and the colonization law (*Siedlungsrecht*) (Lück, 2013, pp. 239-268).

Since the 13th-14th centuries for 650 years, there were almost 500 manuscript-copies of the *Sachsenspiegel* in circulation beyond the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation, unto the Netherlands, Livland, Kiev. They had an overwhelming influence upon the further legal codes of *Schwabenspiegel*, *Magdeburgisches Stadtrecht*, *Augsburger Sachsenspiegel*, *Deutschenspiegel* (Eckhardt, 1924). Among the extant 7 original illustrated manuscripts (*codices picturati, Bilderhandschriften, illuminated manuscripts*), most valuable are those from Dresden, Heidelberg, Oldenburg and Wolfenbüttel (1291-1371).¹⁰

Schwabenspiegel was written by an anonymous Franciscan monk in Augsburg (1275) or (according to more recent opinions) in a monastery of mendicant (beggar) monks in connection with Berthold von Regensburg's sermons (1268-1272). It included the *Landrechtsbuch* (Book of the Land Law), *Lehenrechtsbuch* (Book of Feudal Law), *Kaiserrecht* (Emperor Law), *Kaiser Karls Rechtsbuch* (Book of Law of Emperor Karl), and others.

While *Lehnrecht* was structured in *Schwabenspiegel* the same as in *Sachsenspiegel*, the *Landrechtsbuch* showed, in article 1, that the legal order (*Rechtsordnung*) and justice (*Gerechtigkeit*) were grounded on God's commandments and were aimed to establish the "law on earth" (*irdisches Recht*) by means of "the Pope's spiritual law" (*geistliches Recht des Papstes*), "the Emperor's secular law" (*weltliches Recht des Kaisers*) and the customary law (*Gewohnheitsrecht*). In articles 3-85, it presented "men and their property", touching the law of succession and legal issues related to marriage, origin of free and non-free individuals, tutorage. In articles 86-117, there were recommendations addressed to judges (*Richter*), clerks implementing a sentence (*Fronboten*), orators (*Fürsprecher*), counselors (*Ratgeber*), ushers and tax collectors (*Büttel*), witnesses (*Zeugen*); while articles 118-145 referred to the greatest senior and supreme judge, who was the king, in relation with the empire.

¹⁰ See [Eike von Repgow, *Sachsenspiegel*,] manuscript copy, Rastede, in Landesbibliothek Oldenburg, CIM I 410, <https://digital.lb-oldenburg.de/ihd/content/pageview/193464>; *Die Dresdner Bilderhandschrift des Sachsenspiegels* [Illustrated manuscript of Dresden of the Saxon Mirror], illustrated copy, circa 1350, in Sächsische Landesbibliothek/Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Mscr. Dresd. M. 32, 92 p. 924 illustrated strips, circa 33,5x26 cm, parchment, <http://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/6439/184>.

The second half of *Schwabenspiegel's Landrecht*, in articles 145-377, regulated details regarding everyday life, agriculture, crafts, trade, constructions, position of women, Jews, invalids, registration of legal documents, hunting, circulation on public roads, seniorial monopolies (of currency, boroughs, customs). Today there are over 400 (long, short, normal and systemized) manuscript variants from South Germany (Schwaben, Bayern) and Austria. They had an impact on the legal evolution in North Germany, Schlesien, Bohemia, Transylvania (Derschka, 2002).

Magdeburgisches Stadtrecht, the urban law of Magdeburg, was also of great importance and spreading. It rooted in the tradesmen's customary commercial privileges and rules decided by the town community (*Willkür*). The secularization and transfer of legal power from the town senior and judge, archbishop Wichmann (1188), to the townsmen, who bought and occupied the functions of *Schultheiß* (equivalent to a *Bürgermeister*, mayor) and *Burggraf* (citadel count) in 1294, was consecrated in the same year by the separation of the council (*Rat*) from the *Schöffenstuhl*, which was the peculiar seat of justice formed of 11 *Schöffen* chosen for life to administer justice.

Namely, the Magdeburg law granted to the townsmen: personal freedom, property right, physical and life integrity, the regulation of economic activities. To the tradesmen it conferred the hospitality right (*Gastrecht*), which stipulated that any litigation ought to be solved in court within a single day, then liability for the goods (*Haftung für die Ware*), various issues concerning bookkeeping, fair competition, association capital.

In the criminal law of Magdeburg, the old Germanic and Barbarian *ius gentium* (*Sippenhaft*) was abolished, so it was exclusively the culpable, and not his family, who was to be punished for personal injury or murder, while the witness test (*Zeugenbeweis*) replaced the law of retaliation (*Blutrache*) and the divine judgement (*Gottesurteil*).

Due to the German colonists settled in Central and Eastern Europe, the use of the so-called "Saxon-Magdeburg law" (*sächsisch-magdeburgisches Recht*) or "German town law" (*deutsches Stadtrecht*) expanded in Hungary and Transylvania (Gönczi & Carls, 2013; Moldt, 2009). The influence of the German law also comprised Livland, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia (Eichler, Lück 2008). Within a research grant of the Saxon Academy of Science in Leipzig¹¹, several volumes were recently dedicated to the German law in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechia and Slovakia (Bily, Carls & Gönczi, 2012; Gönczi & Carls, 2014; Bily, Carls, Gönczi & Lazar, 2020).

Ofner Stadtrecht (*Buda Város Jogkönyve*) was the German law imposed in Buda and in the towns of Kaschau (Košice, 1347), Bartfeld (Bardejov, 1370), Eperies (1374), being considered the most comprehensive legal source of the medieval towns from the entire Kingdom of Hungary (Mollay, 1959). During the rule of King Sigismund (1413, 1421), the two parts of this code were compiled, to which the annex was added later (1510). The three manuscripts extant today come from Bratislava (1430-1490, 1503), Budapest (circa 1560) and Baia Mare, now in Budapest (1488-1503), but none of them represents the primary source.

The anonymous *Ofner Stadtrecht* is a prescriptive law containing norms and punishments of common and public law. It is an urban law, too, written in German and aimed to adapt to Hungary the village and town privileges from *Sachsenspiegel*, *Schwabenspiegel*, *Deutschenspiegel*, *Kaiserrecht* etc. (Relković Néda, 1905). Thus, *Ofner Stadtrecht* contains 64

¹¹ Research grant of Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Leipzig), entitled *Das sächsisch-magdeburgische Recht als kulturelles Bindeglied zwischen den Rechtsordnungen Ost- und Mitteleuropas* [The Saxon-Magdeburg Law as an element of cultural connection between the legal systems in Eastern and Central Europe], ended in 2020, <https://www.saw-leipzig.de/de/projekte/das-saechsisch-magdeburgische-recht-als-kulturelles-bindeglied-zwischen-den-rechtsordnungen-ost-und-mittleuropas>.

articles on the city of Buda's governing; 100 articles on the tradesmen, craftsmen, further arts and crafts; 138 articles on the town justice; 38 articles on the relations between the foreign merchants and the city, while the annex includes regulations for grocers (1453), the list of free royal towns (1500), the debate on the right to stop the transit of goods between Buda and Pest (1502-1503) (*Budai jogkönyv*, 1993-2010).

Davori Relković Néda published in 1905 the first interpretation of this law, noting the influences exerted, *via* Transylvania, upon the code of Buda by *Zipser Willkür* (1370) and *Codex Altemberger* of Sibiu (15th century). He rendered parallel prescriptions from *Ofner Stadtrecht* and its sources, illustrating: obligations and formulas of the loyalty oaths of the mayor (*biró*), chancelist, scribe when taking over their positions; distinctive signs and restrictions imposed to Jews in clothing and activity; harsh physical punishments and ordeals for various violations and criminal offences: cutting off the tongue for cursing God and the Saints; for calumny, the defamator had to slap his mouth with his own hand and to openly confess his lie, in the public square; the punishment for murder was decapitation, in the cabbage market of Buda; for raping a maiden, the rapist was decapitated or he was thrown and drown in the Danube River; those who broke the oath of marriage by adultery were buried alive in a pit, near the gallows, then they were both impaled (Relković Néda, 1905, pp. 45-46, 64, 74, 76, 78, 83-84, 162). The role of the proofs (in German called *prieß*, in Latin *inquisitor*, in Hungarian *tudó*) increased. However, in spite of the numerous capital punishments prescribed by the law of Buda, the ordeals with red hot iron and boiled water were rejected and replaced by the oath (Relković Néda, 1905, pp. 198, 199).

5. The Municipal Laws of the Transylvanian Saxons

They were enacted in *Codex Altemberger* (1360-1481), considered to be "the first legal code of the Saxons from Sibiu" (Ginel Lazăr), and in the so-called "Saxon constitution", *Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (1583).

The original *Codex Altemberger*, kept within Romania's National Museum of History in Bucureşti, was recently published in a critical and anastatical edition realised by Ginel Lazăr and Adinel Dincă (Lazăr, 2019, 516 p.). The outstanding codicologic and diplomatic analyses introduce the facsimile of the beautiful manuscript text and miniatures, opening the path to future studies of legal history dedicated to the enactment from Sibiu.

The manuscript, opened by a register (leafs 1 recto - 25 verso), reproduces the copies of several significant German legal codes: *Schwabenspiegel* (leafs 28r-136v), *Magdeburgisches Stadtrecht* (*Meydepurgisches recht*) including the Jews' oath (leafs 137v-162r), the mining and urban law of Jihlava in Czechia (*dy rechte von der Ygla*, leafs 164r-182r). These transumptis prove, on the one hand, good acquaintance with the stipulations of the German urban and mining privileges, and on the other hand, the use and practice of the German laws in the South Transylvanian town of Sibiu since the second half of the 14th century until 1481. In the end (leaf 182v), there is an original item rendered in German language, namely the oath of the Saxon *municipium* officials of Sibiu (*Cibinium, Hermannstadt*), with the town's coat of arms. The Latin colophon on the last page (183r) indicates the name and functions of the *codex*'s owner: Thomas Altemberger (1431-1491), municipal counselor (since 1469), mayor of Sibiu (1472), royal judge (*judex regius, Königsrichter*) in Sibiu (since 1481) and Buda (1486-1491). It also indicates the date when the code was finished: 1481.

In the period of *Codex Altemberger*'s compilation (1360-1481), the town of Sibiu had the ambition, not yet the official quality, to become the capital of the Saxon Land (*Fundus Regius, Sachsenland*), which happened a few years later. The impressive achievement of the royal judge Thomas Altemberger, reflected in *Codex Altemberger*, has surely contributed to the privileged position acquired not only by the town of Sibiu in relation to further Saxon and Transylvanian

municipia, but also by the entire *Fundus Regius*, whose prerogatives were sanctioned by King Matthias Corvinus concomitantly with the establishment of the Saxon University (Müller, 1928, pp. 227-424).

The creation of the *Universitas Saxonum* (*Sächsische Nationsuniversität*) in 1486 was followed by the adoption of a proper code law in order to ensure the ethnic and political autonomy of the Saxon medieval nation in the frame of the Transylvanian state. The many written or unwritten rules of law and municipal statutes (of Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa etc.), in circulation among the Transylvanian Saxons, were summarized by Thomas Bomel, who was commissioned by the Saxon University to elaborate the *Statuta jurium municipalium civitas Cibiniensis, reliquarumque Civitatum et universorum Saxonum Transilvanicorum* (1560). Matthias Fronius revised Bomel's text and, taking suggestions from Johannes Honterus's works, from the Roman law and the Saxon customary law, he wrote *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transilvania* (1570). The form offered by Fronius to this legal code was improved by Lukas Hirscher, Petrus Hirscher and Albert Huet (1570-1582). Then the final text in Latin, followed by the German translation, was sanctioned and promulgated by the prince of Transylvania Stephen Báthory¹² (1583) (Tătar, 2011, p. 361).

Thus, *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transilvania* or, in German denomination, *Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (The Transylvanian Saxons' Proper Land Law) was adopted in 1583 for the entire territory under the jurisdiction of the Saxon National University (see *Eigenlandrecht*, 1973; fragments from *Iura Municipalia Univ. Saxonum Transilv.* in Spulber, 1930, pp. 153-155). It remained in force until the Saxon Land was dissolved (1876), shortly after the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy (1867) (Teutsch, 1916, 1923, 1924; Bolovan & Bolovan, 2000, pp. 21, 50).

Friedrich Schuler von Libloy published for the first time (1853) the *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transilvania*, in the Latin original (1583), followed by the German variant. The *Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen* contained four books dealing with: I. the juridical order (*Gerichtsordnung*); II. the law of family and succession (*Familien- und Erbrecht*); III. the law of obligations (*Obligationsrecht*); IV. the criminal law (*Strafrecht*) of the Transylvanian Saxons (Schuler von Libloy, 1853, 264 p.).

Later, a Romanian translation of the Transylvanian Saxons' municipal constitution was also rendered by Felix Sutschek (1997), while Julia Derzsi dedicated a consistent chapter to the fourth part of the *Eigenlandrecht* (2022), explaining the specific Saxon prescriptions and procedures of criminal law (Sutschek, 1997; Derzsi, 2022, pp. 88-106).

6. Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* and the Transylvanian Hungarian Municipal Statutes

Werbőczy István's *Tripartitum* represents the enactment of the customary law imposed by the Hungarian nobility.

As a matter of fact, following a private initiative, the protonotary of the High Court of Justice in Buda was commissioned with the compilation of the laws of the country. A draft of the *Tripartitum opus iuris consuetudinarii inclyti Regni Hungariae partiumque adnexarum* (Tripartite Work of Consuetudinary Law of the Honoured Kingdom of Hungary and of the Annexed Parts [*Partium*]) was presented by Werbőczy István to the Hungarian diet (1514) and published (1517) (Werbőczy, 1517.).

Although *Tripartitum* was not promulgated by royal decree and didn't receive the royal seal, it was in circulation enjoying a similar rank to that of an official state law. In fact, by

¹² Báthory István (1533-1586) was voivode of Transylvania (1571-1576), then prince of Transylvania (1576-1586), king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania (1576-1586).

another private initiative, the manuscript collections of *decreta regni* were published later (1584), in Trnava (Nagyszombat), by bishops Zakariás Mossóczy and Miklós Telegdi.

As shown in the book edited by Martyn Rady and almost completely dedicated to *Tripartitum* (Rady, 2003), in Hungary the legal source of *consuetudo regni* was more forceful than the royal privileges or the laws of the courts of instance, and more vigorous than the royal decrees (*decreta regni*), promulgated by the king with the agreement of the dietal Estates. For Werbőczy (inspired by Bartolus), the custom (*consuetudo*) meant a set of equal rules used for a long time and accepted by tacit consent by the community (of noblemen, in this case).

Tripartitum managed to turn custom into “national law” of Hungary (in parts I-II) and Croatia (in part III). For centuries, it was also in force in Transylvania and in the Triune Kingdom (*trojedna kraljevina*) of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. *Tripartitum*’s popularity in Hungary, as the most edited book after the Bible, is reflected by its 54 editions (László, 2003, pp. 101, 103; Rady, 2003, p. 5).

The special importance of Werbőczy’s collection reveals the juridical force of the Hungarian nobility from Hungary and Transylvania, who succeeded to impose its own customary law (older than its enactment) against the German urban law promoted by a medieval German bourgeoisie. The *Ofner Stadtrecht* - implemented in the 13th-14th centuries by the German colonists (who had founded the Hungarian capital city) not only here, but in all the towns of the kingdom (Göntzi & Carls, 2014, pp. 126-127) - was thus replaced in the 16th century by this enactment of the Hungarian nobility’s ethnic law (Ibbetson, 2003, pp. 13-23).

Several Hungarian medieval towns in Transylvania (Cluj, Baia Mare) - actually founded by the Saxon or Zipser colonists, who were later assimilated and Magyarised -, elaborated special statutes promoting their guilds and corporations, as well as their own municipal rights and privileges. The corpus of municipal statutes of the Hungarian towns, edited by Kolosvári Sándor and Óvári Kelemen (1885), included also statutes of Transylvanian Saxon and Romanian towns or citadels, like the *Statutes of Făgăraș* from 1508. Another *Corpus Iuris Hungarici, 1000-1895* was edited in 1900 by Márkus Dezső (Kolosvári & Óvári, 1885; Márkus, 1900; Derzsi, 2022, p. 19; Vizauer, 2024, pp. 51-75).

In the Principality of Transylvania, the Hungarian noblemen’s consuetudinary law of *Tripartitum* was expanded in *Approbatæ Constitutiones* (1653), collection adopted by the Transylvanian diet which included the dietal decisions of 1541-1653 (*Approbatæ constitutiones regni Transilvaniae et partium Hungariae eidem annexarum*, 1653), and *Compilatae Constitutiones* (1695), collecting the further dietal decisions of 1654-1669 (*Compilatae constitutiones regni Transilvaniae - Partium Hungariae eidem annexarum*, 1695).

Thus, for instance, *Approbatæ* were divided into five parts dealing with: the church law, the law of the state, the law of the privileged class, the trial procedure and special items of administrative law. By means of these Transylvanian constitutions, the Hungarian nobility definitively secured its domination by: a) the system of 4 accepted religions (Roman-Catholic, Calvinist, Unitarian, Lutheran) and 3 medieval nations or privileged Estates (Hungarians, Szekler, Saxons); b) total exclusion from the social, political, juridical, economic life of the Transylvanian Romanians (who formed the demographic majority, but their nation was only tolerated and their Orthodox religion not accepted); c) serfdom imposed to the peasants.

7. Jus Valachicum of the South Vlachs

Special enactments of the customary law called *Jus Valachicum*, extant in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, were attested in several documents dating from the 14th-18th centuries. A special mention deserves the ethnic distinct law of the Vlachs from the Croatian county of Cetina (1436), that was later followed by *Statuta Valachorum* (1630), issued at the creation of the Austrian military border of the Varaždin generalate.

The *Vlachs' Law from Cetina* in Croatia (18 March 1436) is a privilege published first as a Latin transcription of the Cyrillic original by Radoslav Lopašić (1890), and after a later copy from the 17th century, in his famous Berliner *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, by Vatroslav Jagić (1892). The original charter written in vernacular Croatian in Cyrillic script, as well as the 17th century copy transcribed in Latin letters are preserved in the archive of the Franciscan convent at the castle Trsat (Tersatto bei Fiume) in Rijeka (Lopašić, 1890, pp. 296-298; Lopašić, 1894, pp. 1-12; Jagić, 1892, pp. 156-157; Karbić, Karbić, 2013, pp. 66-67; Isailović, 2017, pp. 32-34).

The *Vlachs' Law* from Cetina was integrally translated into Romanian and analysed, in 1959, by the undeniable expert in the medieval history of the Vlachs in the Northern Balkan Peninsula and great historian Silviu Dragomir (Șipoș, 2012, pp. 72-76)¹³.

Haec Contractum seu transactione Joannis de Frangepanibus cum subditis Valachis (this contract or transaction of Joannes de Frangepanus with the mentioned Vlachs), as the 17th century copy specified, issued by ban Hanž Frankapan, counted “28 unnumbered articles” (Karbić & Karbić, pp. 66-67), or 23 articles according to Dragomir (further paragraphs representing the *protocol* and *eschatocol* of the document). This charter regulated: a) the administration of Vlach villages (*katuni*, *cătune*), several *katuni* being ruled by a chief called *katunar*; b) the Vlach warfare performed by the *voivode*, as military commander leading his soldiers (*voinički*); c) the Vlach justice exerted by *knez* and judges (*suçi*); d) the Vlachs' transhumant shepherding; e) the Vlach trade, transit of goods and other economic matters (Dragomir, 2012, pp. 110-136; Cosma, 2023, pp. 294-297).

Due to Neven Isailović's excellent analysis, dedicated to the legislation regarding the Vlachs before and after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, current historiography has proved that the enactment of the *Vlachs' Law* of 1436 is preceded by newly examined archive material dated a century earlier and coming from a wider area, that includes not only Croatia, but also nowadays Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The mentioned Serbian researcher considers that, except for some solitary fragments, the earliest laws on the Vlachs are to be found in three extant charters of the Serbian kings issued for monasteries, namely King Milutin's charter for the Saint Stephen monastery in Banjska (1314-1316), King Dušan's charter who consecrated the Saint Nicholas church in Vranje to the Hilandar monastery on the Holy Athos Mountain (1343-1345), and the charter issued by the same ruler, who meanwhile had become Emperor Dušan, to the Saint Archangels Mihail and Gavril monastery near Prizren (1348-1354). These charters register two types of dependent so-called ‘people of the church’. While the first type, carrying the specific ethnic name of ‘Serbs’, cultivated land for the monastery, having various agrarian obligations, the second type of dependent people were the Vlachs, organized in groups of houses (*katuns*), who paid the so-called ‘small tithe’ related to animal husbandry, especially shepherding and raising horses and cattle. The Vlachs were subdivided in soldiers (who fought), *celators* (who kept the livestock), *pokloniks* (who gave an additional tax in spring and autumn consisting of woven cloth and two barren rams) and *ubogi vlasi* (poor Vlachs, probably indigent or incapacitated). All these groups had to look after horses and cattle. (Isailović, 2017, pp. 29-31).

The same author mentions another law concerning the Vlachs in Serbia, called in Turkish the Despot's Law (*Despot kanunu*) or the Despot's Custom (*Despot uslūbı*), attested

¹³ Silviu Dragomir (1888-1962), minister of national minorities in Great Romania (1937-1940), professor of Romanian and Southeast European medieval and modern history at the University from Cluj (1918-1947), mastering several languages of the documents (Middle Bulgarian Slavonic, Latin, German, Hungarian, Romanian) and their palaeographies, editor of historical documents, author of memorable irreplaceable monographs (unfortunately never translated into foreign languages) about the Northern Balkan Vlachs (1959) or the Romanian revolutionaries of 1848 (*Avram Iancu*, 1965), was arrested and imprisoned by the Stalinist communists (1949-1955), and only posthumously rehabilitated.

in the first half of the 16th century in the Ottoman *sanjaks* of Smederevo (Semendire), Kruševac (Alaca Hisār) and in the northern parts of Bosnia (Bosna), that is on the Slavonian side of the *nahiyes* Kobaš, Požega (Pojega) and Syrmia (Srem), where the main tax paid by the Vlach animal breeders was *filuria*. Their land became *filurci* land (according to the main tax they paid), and their possessions, often transformed into proper *baštinas* (patrimonial lands), were protected by the sultan or by the *sanjakbeys*. Such laws concerning the Vlachs of the *sanjaks* of Smederevo, Vidin, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Klis, Zvornik and the *vilayet* of Montenegro (Crna Gora) were transplanted into Ottoman *kanuns* (late 15th century - early 16th century). These *kanuns* privileged the Vlachs, who were exempted of paying *harac* (tribute), *oşur* or *ispence*, although they gave some amount of grain to support the needs of the *sanjakbey*. The special status of the Vlachs from the *sanjaks* was abolished in the 1530s, since the border moved further to the north, and so they came to live in the *reayas* (provinces properly incorporated by the Ottomans), being forced to pay the much heavier taxes (Isailović, 2017, pp. 34-39).

Statuta Valachorum (5 October 1630) were issued by Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II, king of Hungary and Croatia¹⁴, especially for the Vlachs from the Croatian Krajina (military border). These statutes regulated the settlement of the Vlach shepherds coming from Turkey, who became *Grenzer* (military border guards) of the Austrian generalate of Varaždin and also free peasants, who were given lots of the Crown land. By means of the *Statuta Valachorum*, they were granted a significant legal autonomy. In Croatia, the colonization of Serbs and Bosnians after 1538 (extensively explained by Vaníček, 1875, pp. 26-28, 81)¹⁵ was concomitant with the colonization of Vlachs (mentioned by Sfera, 2018, Sept. 30).

Lacking armed forces in Austrian Slavonia, after 1570 the Court of Vienna started to colonise a larger number of Vlachs as mercenaries, thus creating the generalates of Karlovac (1579) and Varaždin (1595). During the second Austro-Turkish war (1593-1606), the largest Vlach relocation from Turkish to Habsburg Slavonia took place (Sfera, 2018).¹⁶ Ferdinand II's decree by which the Vlachs were completely exempted from taxes increased the Vlach migration. On 5 October 1630, the Vlachs' statutes were issued for all the Orthodox and Catholic Vlachs from the generalate of Varaždin. Later they were expanded for the Karlovac generalate, too (Moačanin, 1977, pp. 225-232; Kršev, 2011, pp. 129-148; Dragomir, 2012, p. 102; Sfera, 2018, Sept. 22).

These *Statuta Valachorum*, written in Latin, justified and legitimated the imperial policy as being 'a contribution to the expansion and reinforcement of Christianity' among the countries and peoples under imperial authority. Such were the Vlachs, who had settled down in the region between the rivers Sava and Drava under Ferdinand II's predecessors, Rudolf II and Matthias¹⁷, and who had proven 'loyal service and glorious military heroism'.

Several authors have approached this legal historical document of great importance: Franz Vaníček offered the Latin terms and German explanations (Vaníček, 1875, pp. 50-52,

¹⁴ Ferdinand II (1578-1637) was Holy Roman Emperor, King of Bohemia, Hungary and Croatia (1619-1637).

¹⁵ Already on 5 September 1538, from Linz, Emperor Ferdinand I granted a privilege to the first wave of thousands of Serbs led by their captains and voivodes (*Capitaneos et Vojvodas Servianos, seu Rascianos*), who came as colonists and border military from Bosnia to Upper Slavonia (*Oberslavonien*). Vaníček (1875, pp. 26-28) reproduced the Latin original and discussed the 5 articles of the Serbs' privilege of 1538. As a result, in the same year (1538) the first 3 Habsburg captaincies (of Koprivnič/Kopreiniz, Križevac/Kreuzer, Ivanič) with 600 Serbian military were created in present-day Croatia.

¹⁶ This largest colonization wave of the Vlachs was determined by the involvement of the quasi-unknown metropolitan bishop Vasilie of Pakrac (1590-1594), according to Sfera (2018, Sept. 22). It happened a century before the great colonization of the Serbs led by archbishop Arsenije III Crnojević of Pécs (1690-1691). Probably neither the colonization led by the future patriarch Arsenije III Crnojević comprised exclusively Serbs, but also many Vlachs, Albanians etc., nor among the Uskoks were there only Vlachs. Pompilju Sfera seems to be right in the first assumption, and wrong in the second.

¹⁷ Rudolf II (1552-1612) was Holy Roman Emperor of German Nation (1576-1612), King of Hungary and Croatia (as Rudolf I, 1572-1608). Matthias (1557-1619) was Holy Roman Emperor (1612-1619), Archduke of Austria (1608-1619), King of Hungary and Croatia (1608-1618).

456-461); Radoslav Lopašić edited several documents in German, Latin and Croatian (Lopašić, 1894, pp. 1-12); Boris N. Kršev accomplished the Serbian translation of the Latin original (Kršev, 2011, pp. 137-147); Pompilju Sfera made the approximate Romanian translation of the *Statuta Valachorum* (Sfera, 2018, Sept. 22).

The 50 articles of these *Vlašskog zakona* (Vlach laws) are structured in five unnumbered chapters: 1. "About representation and governance of the Vlachs", 10 articles; 2. "About legal procedure", 10 articles; 3. "About the right of possession and use", 9 articles; 4. "About private and public criminal law", 10 articles; 5. "About military duties", 11 articles.

Besides the proper enactment of the privileges contained in *Statuta Valachorum* for the *Vojna Krajina* (1630), of an even greater importance is their multiple reconfirmation along the 17th-18th centuries (1642, 1659, 1667, 1717). It proves that the privileges were in force throughout this period, producing effects for the most relevant demographical category from the respective area and time: the Vlachs. When the Habsburgs revoked the military frontier in 1754, opposition and armed resistance arose, culminating in 1755 with the great uprising of the military border from Severin, where 20,000 armed *Grenzer* participated (Moačanin, 1977, pp. 225-232; Cosma, 2023, pp. 297-301).

8. *Jus Valachicum* of the Romanians from South Transylvania

Since 2017, a research team from the Institute of History 'George Barițiu' of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca has developed an ongoing project dedicated to the legal historical heritage of the South Transylvanian Romanians in medieval and early modern history. A large number of new documents was identified in local archives from Mărginimea Sibiului and edited, while older archive pieces were republished by the historians from Cluj.

By critically editing the legal historical documents of the mountain pastoral communities from Mărginimea Sibiului, as well as the medieval statutes of the Făgăraș Land and citadel, we succeeded to also analyse and systematize prodigious archival data about the Romanian consuetudinary law (*Jus Valachicum*), rendering several relevant case studies of enacted Romanian customary law from 13th-19th century South Transylvania.

They illustrate and explain the Romanian customary law codified in the legal manuscripts discovered in 2017 in a previously unknown church archive from Rășinari (Mărginimea Sibiului): an extract of a deed of donation to the Saint Paraschiva church from Rășinari (1383), the so-called *cartea ocolniță* (book of the village boundaries, 1488) and *Transmissionales in causa Possessionis Resinar contra Liberam Regiamque Civitatem Cibiniensem*, 1784. The latter, *Transmissionales*, an impressive legal manuscript of 1,318 pages, includes half a century of trial deeds filed by the Romanian pastoral village against the Saxon Magistrate in Sibiu (1735-1784). It mirrors not only the juridical practice involved in the use of Romanian consuetudinary law, but also the medieval and early modern legal history of Transylvania. Its comprehensive annexes contain all the documents (13th-18th centuries) that were significant for the history and possessory rights of Rășinari. It also reveals the jurisdiction, levels, activity and powers of the courts on local, provincial and central levels (18th century): 1. the court of the first instance: the village judgement seat from Rășinari (*judicatus pagi Rasinar*), observing Romanian customs (*Mores Valachicales*) and consuetudinary law (*Jus Valachicum*); 2. the court of the second instance as the court of appeal: the Saxon Magistrate from Sibiu, exerted by the mayor of the Sibiu city (*consul Cibiniensis*), seldom by the seat judge (*sedis judex*); 3. the third instance: the Transylvanian Gubernium, also seated in Sibiu; 4. the fourth and last, and also the highest court of instance: the Supreme Court of Justice in Vienna, from where the decisions returned to Sibiu and Rășinari, in the form of *Remissionales*, as imperial ordinances and rescripts (Cosma, 2020a-b, pp. 473-523; Cosma, 2022b-c, pp. 27-43 & 77-98; Cosma, 2023a-b, pp. 73-90 & 271-313).

Considered to be ‘a monument of old Romanian legislation’ (Victor Vizauer), the *Statutes of Făgăraș* (1508) were especially and exclusively issued for the Romanian peasants (*Rusticis Walachis*) and boyars (*Boyarones*) from Făgăraș, exposing in 35 articles the Romanian peasants’ and *Boyarones more et lege ipsorum* (the boyars’ custom and their law) (Vizauer, 2024, pp. 51-75; Cosma, 2022, pp. 15-18; Cosma, 2023c, pp. 43-58).

These enactments demonstrate the existence and functionality of *Jus Valachicum* practiced by the South Transylvanian Romanians in Mărginimea Sibiului and in the Făgăraș Land between the 14th-18th centuries. The specific customary law is connected with the free and privileged social status of the Romanian shepherds (*oieri, ciobani*), armed guards (*plăieși*) on the Carpathian borders between Transylvania and Wallachia, and military small noblemen (*boieri*).

The Romanian institutions of customary law, as reflected in the enactments described above, were exerted by the village judge (called *cnez* in the middle ages, *jude* in early modern and modern history), jurors (*jurați*) and the ‘council of 40 good and old men’ (*sfatul celor 40 de oameni buni și bătrâni*) in Rășinari (44 in Săliște), forming ‘the seat of law’ (*scaunul de lege*) as court of first instance.

‘The importance of the enactments of *Jus Valachicum* is beyond doubt. They abolish the bias of a strictly oral, unwritten, indistinct and loose customary law, with an unknown and somehow mysterious trajectory in a vast time and space.’ (Ela Cosma) It is also worth to notice that the illustrated enactments of Romanian customary law confirm *de iure* the legal situation extant *de facto*, thus proving the long and uninterrupted use of *Jus Valachicum* among the Romanians from South Transylvania during the 14th-18th centuries (Cosma, 2022, pp. 18-19).

Conclusions

The examples offered above from the medieval world of the South Slavs, Germans, Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians confirm the existence of the ethnic customary laws. They were born at the same time with the ethnicities, peoples and social categories who practiced them, but were enacted gradually, according to their access to ecclesiastic and lay power, by means of writing, culture, economy, politics.

In spite of the multiethnic cohabitation in Central Europe and the Balkans, the various ethnic consuetudinary laws had a parallel development, while each of the ethnic communities and nations involved kept their own ethno-juridical peculiarities.

Just like their Slav, German or Hungarian neighbours, the Vlachs from Croatia and Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as the Romanians (our case studies focused on the South Transylvanian Romanians), too, have developed and used from Middle Ages to modern history their own ethnic marked customary law (*Jus Valachicum*), which was widespread and functional during the 14th-18th centuries, as revealed by several less known enactments presented in this study. It is precisely the pastoral component which imposed the *Jus Valachicum* (specific to the Romanians and South Vlachs) as a different, resilient and long-lasting customary law, distinguishing it from other ethnic-marked consuetudinary law systems.

Our comparative approach of the medieval and early modern customary law systems specific to the South Slavs (*Zakon sudnyi ljudem*), Germans (*Sachsenspiegel*, *Schwabenspiegel*, *Ofner Stadtrecht*), Transylvanian Saxons (*Codex Altemberger*, *Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen*), and Hungarians (Werbőczy István’s *Tripartitum*) shows that, except for the regulations for the exploitation of underground resources and mining (*Zipser Willkür*), German law had a clearly urban character, just like the municipal statutes of the Transylvanian Saxons, Hungarians and Croatians, whereas certain Serbian and Croatian laws included predominantly agrarian prescriptions. On the contrary, the Romanians and Vlachs’ customary law was codified in proper enactments having a strong pastoral character,

also specifying their significant military obligations and privileges. Meanwhile, the agrarian component of the Romanian customary law was passed down in form of rather unstructured and uncoded oral traditions, preserved until our days, but pertaining more to ethnography than to history.

We may conclude that there were precisely the economic and social functions of the different ethnic marked Southeastern and Central European customary laws (including *Jus Valachicum*), which determined not only their codification and official adoption by the central state authorities, but also their preservation, resilience and importance over time, from the Middle Ages until the dawn of the modern era.

References:

Critical Editions and Collections of Documents:

Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde (Ed.). (1973). *Das Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen* [The Transylvanian Saxons' proper land law]. (Introduction by A. Laufs, Glossary by W. Bühner). München: H. Meschendorfer.

Approbatæ constitutiones regni Transilvaniae et partium Hungariae eidem annexarum [Approved Constitutions of ruling Transylvania and the Parts of Hungary annexed to It]. (1653). Cluj.

Compilatae constitutiones regni Transilvaniae - Partium Hungariae eidem annexarum [Compiled Constitutions of Ruling Transylvania - the Parts of Hungary Annexed to It]. (1695). Cluj.

Cosma, E. (Ed.) (2020a). *Patrimoniul istorico-juridic românesc din Mărginimea Sibiului (Rășinari, Săliște)* [Romanian legal historical patrimony from Mărginimea Sibiului (Rășinari, Săliște)]. Cluj-Napoca/Gatineau: Argonaut/Symphologic Publishing.

Derschka, H. R. (2002). *Der Schwabenspiegel: Übertragen in heutiges Deutsch mit Illustrationen aus alten Handschriften* [Schwabenspiegel: Translated into current German with illustrations from old manuscripts]. München: C.H. Beck.

Kolosvári, S., & Óvári, K. (Eds.). (1885). *Corpus Statutorum Hungariae Municipalium* [Corpus of the Hungary's municipal statutes] (vol. I). Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia.

Lazăr, G. (Ed.). (2019). *Codex Altemberger: Primul cod de legi al sașilor din Sibiu* [Codex Altemberger: The first law code of the Saxons from Sibiu] (Anastatical edition, Romanian-English introductory studies by G. Lazăr & A. C. Dincă, Chemical and physical analysis of the manuscript by C. Carșote, Z. I. Baltă, I. Petroviciu, E. Badea, & L. Miu). București: National History Museum of Romania.

Lopašić, R. (1890). *Bihać i bihaćka krajina* [Bihać and the Bihać Military Border]. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska.

Lopašić, R. (1894). *Hrvatski urbari: Urbaria lingua Croatica conscripta* [Urbaria: The language of the urbaria conscripted in Croatian language]. In collection *Monumenta historico-juridica Slavorum Meridionalium* [Historical and legal monuments of the South Slavs] (Vol. 5). Zagreb: U knjižari Jugosl. Akademije [Bookstore of the South Slavic Academy].

Margetić, L. (1998). *Vinodolski zakon - La legge del Vinodol - Das Gesetz von Vinodol - The Vinodol Law*. Rijeka: Adamić : Vitagraf.

- Márkus, D. (Ed.). (1900). *Corpus Iuris Hungarici, 1000-1895* [The corpus of the Hungarian rights, 1000-1895]. Budapest: Franklin Társulat.
- Mažuranić, A. (1843). Zakon vinodolski od leta 1280 (!) [The Vinodol law from the year 1280]. *Kolo* 3 (pp. 52-83).
- Relković N. D. (1905). *Buda Város Jogkönyve (Ofner Stadtrecht)* [Law book of the town of Buda]. Budapest: Stephaneum.
- Schuler von Libloy, F. (1853). *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transsilvania: Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen vom Jahre 1583 bearbeitet nach seiner legalen Ausbildung als Grundriß für akademische Vorlesungen* [Statutes of the municipal rights of the Saxons in Transylvania: The Transylvanian Saxons' Proper Land Law from the year 1583 processed according to its legal formation as an outline for academic conferences]. Sibiu: Johann Drotleff.
- Sfera, P. (2018, Sept. 22). *Statuta Valachorum*. Talcuireapocalipsa. Retrieved January 3, 2025, from <https://talcuireapocalipsa.wordpress.com/2018/09/22/statuta-valachorum/>
- Spulber, C. (1930). *Latină juridică clasică și medieval: Texte alese din legi, formule, documente, scriitori, pentru uzul studenților în drept* [Classical and medieval legal Latin: Chosen texts from laws, formulas, documents, writers, for the use of the law students]. Cernăuți: Tipografia Mitropolitului Silvestru.
- Sutschek, F. (1997). *Statutele municipale ale sașilor din Transilvania: Din istoria dreptului transilvan* [The municipal statutes of the Saxons in Transylvania: From the history of the Transylvanian law]. Stuttgart: self-published.
- Werböczy, I. (1517). *Tripartitum opus iuris consuetudinarii inclyti Regni Hungariae partiumque adnexarum* [Tripartite work of consuetudinary law of the honoured Kingdom of Hungary and of the annexed parts], Vienna: Ioannes Syngrenius Typographus.
- Books:**
- Berman, H. (1983). *Law and revolution: The formation of the Western legal tradition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bielitz, G. A. (1823). *Praktischer Kommentar zum allgemeinen Landrechte für die preußischen Staaten* [Practical comments to the general land law of the Prussian States] (vol. I). Erfurt: Kayser Verlag.
- Bily, I., Carls, W., & Gönczi, K. (2012). *Sächsisch-magdeburgisches recht in Polen: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Rechts und seiner Sprache* [Saxon-Magdeburg law in Poland: Analyses regarding the history of the law and its language]. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Bily, I., Carls, W., Gönczi, K., & Lazar, M. (2020). *Sächsisch-magdeburgisches Recht in Tschechien und in der Slowakei* [Saxon-Magdeburg law in Czechia and Slovakia]. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Bolovan, S. P., & Bolovan, I. (2000). *Germanii din România* [The Germans from Romania]. Cluj-Napoca: Fundația Culturală Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane.
- Derzsi, J. (2022). *Delict și pedeapsă: Justiție penală în orașele săsești din Transilvania în veacul al XVI-lea* [Crime and penalty: Criminal law in the Saxon towns from Transylvania in the 16th century]. Cluj-Napoca: Egyetemi Műhely.

- Dragomir, S. (2012). *Vlahii din nordul Peninsulei Balcanice în Evul Mediu* [The Vlachs from the Northern Balkan Peninsula in the Middle Ages] (S. Şipoş, Ed., introductory studies by I.-A. Pop & S. Şipoş). Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane.
- Droege, G. (1969). *Landrecht und Lehnrecht im hohen Mittelalter* [Land law and feudal law in late Middle Ages]. Bonn: Röhrscheid.
- Eckhardt, K. A. (1924). *Der Deutschenspiegel: Seine Entstehungsgeschichte und sein Verhältnis zum Schwabenspiegel* [*Deutschenspiegel: Its evolution and its relations to the Schwabenspiegel*]. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau.
- Eichler, E., & Lück, H. (Eds.). (2008). *Rechts- und Sprachtransfer in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Sachsenspiegel und Magdeburger Recht. Internationale und interdisziplinäre Konferenz in Leipzig vom 31. Oktober bis 2. November 2003* [Law and language transfer in Central and Eastern Europe: *Sachsenspiegel* and Magdeburg law: International and interdisciplinary conference in Leipzig, 31 October – 2 November 2003]. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Glenn, H. P. (2004). *Legal Traditions – Sustainable Diversity in Law*, second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gönczi, K. & Carls, W. (2014). *Sächsisch-magdeburgisches Recht in Ungarn und Rumänien: Autonomie und Rechtstransfer im Donau- und Karpatenraum* [Saxon-Magdeburg law in Hungary and Romania: Autonomy and law transfer in the Danube-Carpathian area]. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Van Hoecke, M. Ed. (2004). *Epistemology and methodology of comparative law*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.
- Karbić, D., & Karbić, M. (2013). *The laws and customs of medieval Croatia and Slavonia: A guide to the extant sources* (M. Rady, Ed.). London: University College London.
- Merryman, J. H. (1985). *The civil law tradition: An introduction to the legal systems of Western Europe and Latin America* (2nd ed.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Moldt, D. (2009). *Deutsche Stadtrechte im mittelalterlichen Siebenbürgen* [German town laws in medieval Transylvania]. Köln, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau.
- Mollay, K. (1959). *Das Ofner Stadrecht, eine deutschsprachige Rechtssammlung des 15. Jahrhunderts aus Ungarn* [The town law of Buda, a German language legal collection of the 15th century from Hungary]. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger.
- Möhlmann, R. (2002). *Landrecht und Lehnrecht im Mittelalter* [Land law and feudal law in the Middle Ages]. Bochum, München: Grin Verlag.
- Müller, G. (1928). *Die sächsische Nationsuniversität in Siebenbürgen: Ihre verfassungs- und verwaltungsrechtliche Entwicklung, 1224-1876* [The Saxon National University in Transylvania: Its legal constitutional and administrative development, 1224-1876]. Published extract from *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landskunde*, XLIV (2-3). Sibiu: Verein für Siebenbürgische Landskunde.

- Oppitz, U. D. (1991, 1993). *Deutsche Rechtsbücher des Mittelalters* [German law books of the Middle Ages], (vol. I). *Beschreibung der Rechtsbücher* [Description of the law books]. Köln, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1991, 325 p.
- Oppitz, U. D. (1991, 1993). *Deutsche Rechtsbücher des Mittelalters* [German law books of the Middle Ages], (vol. II). *Beschreibung der Handschriften* [Description of the manuscripts]. Köln, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1991, 569 p.
- Oppitz, U. D. (1991, 1993). *Deutsche Rechtsbücher des Mittelalters* [German law books of the Middle Ages], vol. (III/1-3). *Abbildungen und Fragmente* [Illustrations and fragments]. Köln, Vienna: Böhlau, 1993, 2143 p.
- Rady, M. (Ed.). (2003). *Custom and law in Central Europe* (introduction by J. M. Bak). Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Teutsch, F. (1924). *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* [The Transylvanian Saxons in past and present]. Sibiu: K. F. Köhler, W. Kraft. (Original work published 1916.)
- Vaníček, F. (1875). *Specialgeschichte der Militärgrenze aus Originalquellen und Quellenwerken geschöpft* [Special history of the military border drawn from original sources and editions of sources] (vol. I). Vienna: K.k. Hof- und Staats-Druckerei.
- Studies:**
- Beke-Martos, J. (2021). Custom and tradition: An ambiguous relationship. *Revista Română de Istoria Dreptului / Romanian Journal of Legal History*, 1, 5-25.
- Birin, A. (2014). The foreigner and ownership Rights in Eastern Adriatic Medieval Communes. In I. B. Latin & Z. P. Vadić (Eds.), *Towns and cities of the Croatian Middle Ages: Authority and property* (pp. 455-468). Zagreb: Croatian Institute of History.
- Budai jogkönyv [Legal book from Buda]. (1993–2010). In I. Diós & J. Viczián (Eds.), *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon* [Hungarian Catholic lexicon]. Online edition by A. Rác. Retrieved January 3, 2025, from <https://lexikon.katolikus.hu/B/Budai%20jogk%C3%B6nyv.html>
- Burgmann, L. (1998). *Zakon sudnyj ljudem* [Law for judging the people]. *Lexikon des Mittelalters* [Lexicon of the Middle Ages], 9 (col. 470). München: Brepols.
- Cosma, E. (2020b). Din practicile juridice de la Rășinari: *Jus Valachicum* în două ascultări de martori (1738 și 1776-1777) [From the legal practices in Rășinari: *Jus Valachicum* in two hearings of witnesses (1738 and 1776-1777)]. In E. Cosma (Ed.), *Patrimoniul Istórico-Juridic Românesc din Mărginimea Sibiului (Rășinari, Săliște)* [Romanian legal historical patrimony from Mărginimea Sibiului (Rășinari, Săliște)] (pp. 473-523). Cluj-Napoca / Gatineau: Argonaut / Symphologic Publishing.
- Cosma, E. (2022a). Enacted *Jus Valachicum* in South Transylvania (14th-18th centuries). *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai: Series Historia*, 67(1), 3-20.
- Cosma, E. (2022b). A legal manuscript of 1784, reflecting the possessory rights of the Romanian pastoral village of Rășinari. *Philobiblon*, XXVII(1), 27-43.
- Cosma, E. (2022c). The urbarial trials in the cause of the possessions held by the village of Rășinari against the city magistrate of Sibiu (1735-1784). In *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire* [New studies

- of history], XIV, publié par l'occasion du XXIII^e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Poznań, 2022 (pp. 77-98). Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române.
- Cosma, E. (2023a). The Bishops' House in the Romanian Pastoral Village of Răşinari (Mărginimea Sibiului) and Its Hidden Treasures: 'Book of the boundaries' & Deed of donation (1488, 1383) and *Transmissionales in causa Posseionis Resinar contra Liberam Regiamque Civitatem Cibiniensem* (1784). *Eikón Imago*, 12, *Imago, ius, religio. Religious Images in Illustrated Legal Manuscripts and Printed Books (9th-20th Centuries)*, ed. by M.A. Bilotta and G. del Monaco (pp. 73-90). Madrid: Ediciones Complutense.
- Cosma, E. (2023b). A historiographical survey of *Ius Valachicum* among Romanians and Vlachs. *Balkanica Posnaniensia: Acta et Studia*, XXX, 271-313.
- Cosma, E. (2023c). *Ius Valachicum* legiferat în Statutele Făgăraşului (15 mai 1508) [*Ius Valachicum* enacted in the statutes of Făgăraş (15 May 1508)]. *Acta Terrae Fogarasiensis*, XII, 43-58.
- Federal Judicial Center (Ed.). (n.d.). Customary law. Defining customary law – How is customary law different? In *Judiciaries Worldwide: A resource on comparative judicial practice*. Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <https://judiciariesworldwide.fjc.gov/customary-law>
- Galović, T. (2019). Combating corruption in Croatia in the Middle Ages: An example of Croatian legal documents - The law code of Vinodol (1288) and statute of the Island of Krk/Vrbnik (1388). *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci*, 40(2), 869-897. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30925/zpfsr.40.2.9>
- Glenn, H. P. (1997). The capture, reconstruction and marginalization of "custom". *American Journal of Comparative Law*, 45(3), 613-620.
- Glenn, H. P. (2004). Legal cultures and legal traditions. In M. Van Hoecke (Ed.), *Epistemology and methodology of comparative law*, (pp.7-20). Oxford: Hart Publishing,
- Ibbetson, D. (2003). Custom in the *Tripartitum*. In M. Rady (Ed.), *Custom and law in Central Europe* (pp. 13-24). Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Faculty of Law.
- Ibbetson, D. (2015). The challenges of comparative legal history. *Comparative Legal History*, 1(1), 1-11.
- Isailović, N. (2017). Legislation concerning the Vlachs of the Balkans before and after Ottoman conquest: An overview. In S. Rudić & S. Aslantaş (Eds.), *State and society in the Balkans before and after the establishment of Ottoman Rule* (pp. 25-42). Belgrade: Institute of History & Turkish Cultural Centre Belgrade.
- Jagić, V. (1892). Privilegien einiger dalmatinischer Vlachén aus dem J. 1436 [Privileges of Dalmatian Vlachs from the year 1436]. In V. Jagić (Ed.), *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, 14, 156-157.
- Karbić, D. (2003). *Hungarian and Croatian customary law: Some contrasts and comparisons*. In M. Rady (Ed.), *Custom and Law in Central Europe* (pp. 37-45). Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Kršev, B. N. (2011). *Statuta Valachorum: Pravna osnova nastanka vojne granice: Krajine* [The legal basis for the establishment of the military border: Krajina]. *Civitas*, 2, 129-148. Novi Sad: Faculty of Studies in Law and Business.

- László, P. (2003). The primacy of *consuetudo* in Hungarian law. In M. Rady (Ed.), *Custom and law in Central Europe* (pp. 101-112). Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Lück, H. (2013). Woher kommt das Lehnrecht des *Sachsenspiegels*? Überlegungen zu Genesis, Charakter und Struktur [Where does the feudal law of the *Sachsenspiegel* derive from? Considerations regarding its genesis, character and structure]. In K.-H. Spieß (Ed.), *Vorträge und Forschungen. Vol. 76: Ausbildung und Verbreitung des Lehnswesens im Reich und in Italien im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* [Proceedings and research. Vol. 76: Formation and spread of the feudal law in the [German] Empire and in Italy in the 12th-13th centuries]. Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlags. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/vuf.2013.0.33716>.
- Margetić, L. (2008). Laws, common laws, statutes, privileges. In I. Supićić & E. Hercigonja (Eds.), *Croatia and Europe: A cultural survey: Croatia in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Vol. II, pp. 150-165). London: Macmillan, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb.
- Moačanin, F. (1977). *Statuta Valachorum* od 14. aprila 1667 [*Statuta Valachorum* from 14 April 1667]. *Historijski zbornik*, 29-30(21), 225-232.
- Petrak, M. (2018). *Liber Methodius* between the Byzantium and the West: Traces of the odest Slavonic legal collection in medieval Croatia. *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire* (pp. 213-224). Leiden, Boston: Brill. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004380134_012.
- Ravančić, G. (2014). Urban settlements (*oppida*) of Vinodol under the rule of the counts of Krk: Topographical situation and local organization within the feudal manor. In I. B. Latin & Z. P. Vadić (Eds.), *Towns and cities of the Croatian Middle Ages: Authority and property* (pp. 189-207). Zagreb: Croatian Institute of History.
- Sfera, P. (2018, Sept. 30). *Luptătorii vlahi din Žumberak* [The Vlach fighters from Žumberak]. *Talcuireapocalipsa*. Retrieved from January 3, 2025, from <https://talcuireapocalipsa.wordpress.com/2018/09/30/luptatorii-vlahi-din-zumberak/>.
- Tătar, O. (2011). "Sașii își trag originea din Saxonia": Problematika originii și numelui sașilor ardeleni în scrieri din secolul al XVI-lea ["The Saxons derive their name from Saxony": The issues of the origin and name of the Transylvanian Saxons in writings from the 16th century]. *Terra Sebus: Acta Musei Sabesiensis*, 3, 353-369.
- Vizauer, V. V. (2024). The statutes of the Romanians from Făgăraș (1508): A historical perspective and a comparison with the Transylvanian Saxon and Szekler customary laws. *Balcanica Posnaniensia: Acta et Studia*, XXXI, 51-75.
- Watson, A. (2004). Legal culture versus legal tradition. In M. Van Hoecke (ed.), *Epistemology and methodology of comparative law* (pp.1-6). Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Appendix

1. Law codes of the South Slavs

- *Zakón súdnyi liúdem*: lost original (circa 850), Russian manuscript (1280), copies (1200-1400);
- *Liber Sclavorum qui dicitur Methodius*, in *Ljetopis Popa Dukljanina* (after 1150), translation as *Hrvatska kronika* (1350-1450).

2. Croatian and Dalmatian municipal statutes

- town statute of Korčula (1265);
- town statute of Ragusa (1272);
- *Vinodolski zbornik* (1288);
- town statutes of Zadar and Brač (1305);
- town statute of Lastovo (1310);
- town statute of Split (1312);
- town statute of Trogir (1322);
- town statutes of Šibenik, Skradin, Rab and Kotor (ante 1325);
- town statute of Hvar (1331);
- town statute of Mljet (1345);
- town statute of Poreč (1363);
- town statute of Pag (1372);
- statute of Krk or Vrbnik (1388);
- town statute of Senj (1388);
- town statute of Novi Vinodolski (1402);
- town statute of Pula (1431);
- *Poljički novi statut* (1440 or 1444);
- town statute of Budva (1442);
- *Statutum Ligae Zadar* (circa 1450);
- *Vranski zbornik* (1454);
- *Statut lige kotara ninskog* (circa 1460-1490)
- town statute of Umag (1528);
- town statute of Rijeka (1530).

3. German town laws

- *Sachsenspiegel*, compiled by Eike von Repgow (1220-1235), 500 copies (until 1900);
- *Schwabenspiegel* (1275);
- *Magdeburgisches Stadrecht* (1188-1294);
- Buda town law or *Ofner Stadrecht* (1300-1413 and 1421-1510), applied also in Košice (1347), Bardejov (1370), Eperies (1374); 3 extant manuscript copies from Bratislava (1430-1490, 1503), Budapest (circa 1560) and Baia Mare, now in Budapest (1488-1503).

4. Transylvanian Saxon municipal laws

- *Codex Altemberger* from Sibiu (1360-1481);
- *Statuta jurium municipalium civitas Cibiniensis, reliquarumque Civitatum et universorum Saxonum Transilvanicorum* of Thomas Bomel (1560); revised by Matthias Fronius in *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transilvania* (1570); improved by Lukas Hirscher, Petrus Hirscher and Albert Huet (1570-1582); adopted as *Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transilvania* or, in German denomination, *Eigenlandrecht der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (1583).

5. Hungarian *Tripartitum* and code laws from Transylvania

- *Tripartitum opus iuris consuetudinarii incltyi Regni Hungariae partiumque adnexarum* by Werbőczy István (1514), published (1517);
- *Approbatæ constitutiones regni Transilvaniae et partium Hungariae eidem annexarum* (1653);
- *Compilatae Constitutiones* (1695).

6. *Jus Valachicum* of the South Vlachs

- King Milutin's charter for the Saint Stephen monastery in Banjska (1314-1316);
- King Dušan's charter for the consecration of the Saint Nicholas church in Vranje to the Hilandar monastery on the Holy Athos Mountain (1343-1345);
- Emperor Dušan's charter for the Saint Archangels Mihail and Gavril monastery near Prizren (1348-1354);
- *Vlachs' Law from Cetina* in Croatia (1436);
- Ottoman *kanuns* which privileged the Vlachs from Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia (1500-1600);
- *Statuta Valachorum* from the Croatian Krajina (1630), reconfirmed (1642, 1659, 1667, 1717).

7. *Jus Valachicum* of the South Transylvanian Romanians

- extract of a deed of donation to the Saint Paraschiva church from Răşinari (1383);
- *cartea ocolniţă* from Răşinari (1488);
- *Statutes of Făgăraş* for the Romanian *Rustici* and *Boyarones* (1508);
- *Transmissionales in causa Posseionis Resinar contra Liberam Regiamque Civitatem Cibiniensem* (1784), with document annexes (ante 1300 - post 1800).

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND PRINCIPALITY OF TRANSYLVANIA IN THE MID-16th CENTURY AND THE ALLIANCE PROJECT OF 1558¹

Victor V. VIZAUER

The Romanian Academy
George Barițiu Institute of History. Cluj-Napoca, Romania

e-mail: victor.vizauer@acad-cj.ro

Abstract

The article analyses the diplomatic relations between the Principality of Transylvania and France during the period 1541–1559, under the leadership of Queen Isabella Szapolya (Jagiellon). The political context is marked by the unstable balance of power among the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburgs, and the French kings, the latter being allies of the Turks. During this time, Francis I and Henry II sought to support Transylvania, viewing it as a strategic ally against the Habsburgs. Key moments include diplomatic missions, such as that of Bishop John Statileo to France, and the 1558 alliance project, which proposed a marriage between John Sigismund and a French princess, alongside French financial and military support. Although the plan was promising, conflicting interests among France, the Habsburgs, and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the political maneuvers of certain French and Transylvanian figures, prevented the alliance from materializing. Queen Isabella, a strong-willed leader, played a significant role in maintaining Transylvania's political autonomy, but internal and external challenges limited the success of her diplomatic endeavours. The good relations with France did not end with the queen's death, as they were continued by her son, Prince John Sigismund. The article highlights the complexity of diplomacy in 16th-century Europe and Transylvania's role in the geopolitical balance of Central Europe.

Keywords: Transylvania; France; alliance; 16th century; Ottoman Empire; Habsburg; diplomatic relations.

Introduction

Through this article, I aim to bring to the attention of researchers and history enthusiasts a topic that has been lesser explored, at least in Romanian historiography, namely the diplomatic relations between the young Principality of Transylvania and France. The period in question is the mid-16th century, specifically the years 1541–1559, focusing on the relations with France maintained by Queen Isabella Szapolya (Jagiellon) after the death of King John Szapolya (1540) until her own passing (1559), with particular emphasis on the 1558 alliance project between the two countries. Naturally, Transylvania's relations with France predated 1541 and did not end with the queen's death, as they were continued by John Sigismund Szapolya.

Why are the diplomatic relations between Transylvania and France important? These connections influenced Transylvanian politics in various ways regarding its position towards the two great neighbouring empires, the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. This was because the French kings, initially Francis I (1515–1547) and later Henry II (1547–1559), were allies of

¹ Article History: Received: 07.04.2025. Accepted: 08.04.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

the Turks and enemies of the Germans. This situation fostered an affinity between the two countries, with France seeking to support Transylvania both in its relations with the Ottoman Porte and in its struggles against the forces of Ferdinand of Habsburg.

1. Franco-Transylvanian Relations between 1541 and 1558

As previously stated, the ties between Hungarian kings and France preceded the diplomatic relations cultivated by Queen Isabella. I will mention only the most recent diplomatic contacts between King John Szapolya (1526-1540) and Francis I, specifically those from 1538-1540. In 1538, an envoy of the French king, De Goys, visited the court of King John. Later that same year, the Hungarian king sent a delegation to Paris, led by the Bishop of Transylvania, Ioan Statileo (Horváth, 1872, p. 80).

Approximately two years later, shortly before King John's departure for Transylvania to suppress the rebellion of the voivodes Ștefan Mailat and Imre Balassa, another French envoy, Lacroix, arrived in Buda. After extensive discussions with John Szapolya, it was decided that István Werböczy would be sent to Paris along with the French envoy. However, George Martinuzzi – bishop of Oradea, royal treasurer and guardian (from 1540) of Prince John Sigismund – insisted that the same Bishop Ioan Statileo be sent instead. The bishop reluctantly accepted the mission, but only after Queen Isabella's persistent requests. It appears that he set out for Paris four to five weeks after King John had departed for Transylvania. On May 25, the king wrote to Ioan Statileo, who was still in France, informing him that he had successfully quelled Ștefan Mailat's rebellion (Zsalay, 1859, pp. 183-186; Horváth, 1872, p. 87 and footnote no. 2, p. 87; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 269; Szilágyi, 1876a, p. 4; Veress, 1901, pp. 71-72).

However, in July 1540, King John died. Shortly afterward, Ferdinand I of Habsburg, as King of Hungary, attempted to claim the country for himself, prompting the intervention of the Ottoman Porte. Leading a large army in the summer of 1541, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent arrived in Hungary, and on August 29, he occupied the capital, Buda, and the central part of the country, turning it into an Ottoman province. Transylvania, along with the territories of Hungary east of the Tisza River (known as *Partium Regni Hungariae* or simply *Partium*), was to form a separate state ruled by Queen Isabella, Brother George Martinuzzi, and Peter Petrovici, in the name of and until the coming of age of Prince John Sigismund Szapolya. From this moment on, the foreign relations of the new country were under the queen's jurisdiction. However, Brother George assumed full power, effectively sidelining Isabella from key decisions (*Album Oltardianum 1526-1629*, pp. 12-22; Possevino, 1913, pp. 70-73; Forgách, 1982, p. 5; Zsalay, 1859, pp. 187-196; Veress, 1901, pp. 177-194; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 4, 31, 93; Felezeu, 1996, pp. 75-76; Feneșan, 1997, pp. 83-97).

Another attempt at collaboration with the French is recorded a decade later, in 1551, shortly before the Habsburg takeover of Transylvania, facilitated by Bishop George Martinuzzi. In fact, as early as 1545, one of Francis I's envoys to Constantinople, Jean de Montluc, had emphasized the strategic importance of Transylvania for French policy in this part of Europe. He specifically considered the Principality to be the only viable support for a Hungarian and Romanian revolt (Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. VIII, p. 4).

Returning to the year 1551, correspondence between Brother George and Ferdinand of Habsburg reveals that Martinuzzi requested the archduke to capture a Dominican monk named Augustinus, who was allegedly heading to France to represent Isabella's interests. His mission is not explicitly detailed, but Brother George was concerned that this embassy might create

complications² that might, in turn, delay Transylvania's transition to Habsburg rule. George Martinuzzi had been actively working towards this political shift for some time.³

The measures taken by Brother George to prevent the strengthening of relations between Isabella and the King of France were carried out in a context in which Suleiman the Magnificent had withdrawn his support for Martinuzzi as early as the previous year, branding him a traitor and a scoundrel. In the *firman* sent to Queen Isabella, Count Peter Petrovici, and other lords and cities of Transylvania at the end of July 1550, the sultan informed them of his decision to remove Brother George from the leadership of the country. The decree also mentioned that the French king had alerted him to certain actions of Brother George, describing him as disloyal, accusing him of amassing wealth for himself – even though he was a friar – rather than for the queen and her son, of keeping soldiers constantly in his service, of seizing the best estates and fortresses for himself, and of plotting to expel the widow and son of King John Szapolya from the country in order to bring Transylvania under the authority of Ferdinand of Habsburg.⁴ Earlier, on April 24 of the same year, the French ambassador in Constantinople, d'Aramon, wrote to King Henry II that the sultan had decided to ensure the loyalty of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia in his struggle against the Germans (Charrière, 1850, p. 114; Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. IX, pp. 4-5).

Between 1551 and 1556, the ties between the French and Queen Isabella continued in Poland, in the various locations where the queen resided. During these years, Isabella and her son found their most significant supporter in Henry II of France (Marczali, 1935, p. 89; Makkai, Mócsy, 1986, p. 439). The representatives of the King of France at the Ottoman Porte acted against the Habsburgs, carrying out diplomatic efforts in support of Isabella and her son, John Sigismund, to reclaim the throne of Transylvania. This restoration was favourable to France, as it weakened the Habsburgs by causing them to lose a territory that Ferdinand of Habsburg considered important and necessary in the context of his rivalry and conflicts with the Turks in Hungary.

After Transylvania came under the authority of King Ferdinand, Queen Isabella and Prince John Sigismund left for Poland in August 1551 (though they remained in Košice until the summer of 1552), and Brother George was assassinated on December 17, 1551. However, the situation in the country was not as the Germans had hoped. By early 1552, the Transylvanians had grown weary of the Habsburgs' so-called *Christian aid* represented by General Giovanni Battista Castaldo, a Milanese noble, and his mercenaries (6,000 or 7,000 in number; it was said that when they left Transylvania, they transported stolen goods from the locals in over 50 wagons). There was open talk about bringing back Queen Isabella and John Sigismund. This plan was wholeheartedly supported by both the sultan and the King of France. In 1552 alone, the Ottoman Porte sent around 20 letters to the Transylvanian estates and cities, as well as to certain nobles, urging them to expel the Germans and restore John Sigismund and Queen Isabella to the country (Feneşan & Feneşan, 2013, doc. 31-51, pp. 162-213; doc. 58, pp. 225-226; Ribier, 1666, pp. 407-408; Charrière, 1850, pp. 184-185; Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. XV, p. 8; Possevino, 1913, pp. 78-82). There was also an exchange of letters between the sultan and the Habsburgs regarding the former's intention to restore the queen and her son to the country (Veress, 1929, doc. 97, pp. 84-85). Meanwhile, the King of Poland was preparing to recruit soldiers to reinstate his nephew on the throne of Transylvania (Veress, 1929, doc. 101, p. 88).

² Letter dated July 12, 1551 (Károlyi, 1881, doc. CLX/b, pp. 247-248).

³ Regarding Martinuzzi's negotiations with Ferdinand for the entry of Transylvania under Habsburg control, see Veress, 1891, pp. 274-328; Oborni, 2020, pp. 226-232.

⁴ For the full text of the *Firman* see Szilágyi, 1876, pp. 307-311.

Therefore, Ferdinand suspected that this was the real reason why Isabella was dissatisfied with the estates in Silesia that she had received from him in exchange for ceding Transylvania – rather than their poverty, as was officially claimed. Since she spent most of her time in Poland with her brother and mother, King Sigismund Augustus and Queen Bona, Ferdinand believed that her discontent was not due to the estates' poor condition. After all, Frankenstein Castle was considered a beautiful and pleasant residence. Thus, the situation was favourable for Isabella to voice her complaints to Ferdinand regarding the dire state of the estates she had received, whose revenues were significantly lower than the amounts initially promised by the Habsburgs. Fearing that, out of disappointment, the queen might wish to return to Transylvania, a new 17-point agreement was reached between Ferdinand and Isabella at the end of August 1552. Among other things, it was promised that an investigation into the estates' revenues would be conducted, and that, if necessary, additional properties would be granted to supplement them. Discussions on these issues continued into the following year. Moreover, due to the poverty of Oppeln (Opole, Poland), the queen insisted that she was compelled to reside mostly in Poland. This made the idea of returning to Transylvania increasingly appealing to her – especially since Prince John Sigismund had begun to reproach his mother for agreeing to cede Transylvania. Ultimately, the situation developed towards the very outcome that Ferdinand had been trying to avoid at all costs (Hatvani, 1859, doc. 272-276, p. 22-34; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 347-379, 380-443; Veress, 1901, pp. 331-355; Possevino, 1913, p. 83).⁵

Decisive for the acceptance of the idea of the queen's return to Transylvania was the visit of Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, ambassador of the French king Henry II, who offered French intervention with the sultan for the restitution of the parental estates to Prince John Sigismund. Additionally, at the order of the Ottoman Porte, envoys from the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia came to Isabella, prompting her to re-establish contact with the Transylvanian estates.

Meanwhile, the queen reassured Ferdinand, who, in turn, advised her to be cautious about the French king and eventually resolved the issue of Isabella's revenues by granting her the principality of Ratibor. However, in December 1552, the king of France once again assured Isabella of his support for the young prince's return to the Transylvanian throne.⁶

Then, in August 1553, the French ambassador to the Porte, Gabriel de Luels, sent a letter to the nobles and Szekler estates, informing them that he had intervened with the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, after which the sultan reconfirmed that he would grant Transylvania only to John Sigismund Zapolya. To achieve this, Transylvanian supporters were to take steps to facilitate the return of Queen Isabella and John Sigismund. Additionally, King Henry II asked Sigismund Augustus, the king of Poland, to also assist in this matter (Feneşan & Feneşan, 2013, doc. 76, pp. 264-265).

Even the voivode of Moldavia, Alexandru Lăpuşneanu, assured the Transylvanian nobles of his support for the return of King John's son to Transylvania (Veress, 1929, doc. 172, pp. 131-132; doc. 189-191 and 193, pp. 143-146). In January 1554, one of the French king's envoys, dressed in Hungarian attire, arrived in Constantinople alongside two of Isabella's envoys and one from Peter Petrovici to advocate for the queen's cause and to prevent the planned marriage between Prince John Sigismund and one of King Ferdinand's daughters,

⁵ For details on the new agreement between Ferdinand and Isabella, see Veress, 1901, pp. 351-355; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 3-6. See also Căzan, Denize, 2001, p. 273 passim; Makkai, Mócsy, 1987, pp. 431-435; Felezeu, 1996, pp. 78-79; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 150-154.

⁶ Two letters addressed by King Henry II to Peter Petrovici (December 20, 1552) and Queen Isabella (December 25, 1552), in *Magyar történelmi okmánytár, a Brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból* [Hungarian Historical Document Collection from the National Archives in Brussels and the Burgundian Library]. Összeszedte s lemásolta in Hatvani, 1858, doc. 253 and 254, pp. 359-361; Veress, 1929, doc. 164, p. 126; Veress, 1901, pp. 356, 358.

proposing instead the hand of a French princess (Szalay, 1858-1859, doc. nr. LXIII, pp. 174-176; Ribier, 1666, pp. 488-489; Veress, 1901, p. 378; Szilágyi, 1876a, p. 459).

Also, in the year 1554 (with discussions extending into 1555), the idea of an alliance with France was once again brought to the table, although it seems that discussions had already begun in 1552 (Horn, 2012, p. 97) or were a continuation of the attempts from 1551. Specifically, it was a matrimonial alliance viewed from a dual perspective. The plan considered a French princess for John Sigismund and a prince for Queen Isabella, while both the French and the Polish worked toward reinstating the two at the head of Transylvania. While the Poles operated from the shadows, the French were much more visible, especially due to the open conflict between Henry II and Emperor Charles V (Szalay, 1858-1859, doc. CXIII, p. 337; Szilágyi, 1876a, p. 467; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 66-67; Căzan & Denize, 2001, p. 278).⁷

In March 1555, Ferdinand of Austria was informed that an envoy of the French king had presented Queen Isabella with a proposal for a matrimonial alliance and assistance in reclaiming the lost territories of Transylvania and Hungary. In addition to marrying one of Henry II's daughters, Prince John Sigismund was to receive a sum of money (from the French bank in Constantinople) to finance a war against the Germans (Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 89-90).

Besides the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, Michel de Codignac – who was in constant contact with Antonius Verancsics and Franciscus Zay, the Habsburg envoys in the Ottoman capital – a French royal agent, Jacob Cambray, passed through the territories controlled by Peter Petrovici and made a visit to Transylvania. There, he addressed a substantial letter to the Transylvanian estates, urging them to bring back John Sigismund (Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 467-468; doc. nr. XVII, pp. 532-536).

In the context of the actions undertaken by the Turks to bring Transylvania back under their suzerainty by reinstating the young John Sigismund as prince – the prince was urged to hasten his return to Hungary, as the banner had already been sent to him and was received by Peter Petrovici, who was also granted Lugoj, Caransebeș, and other fortresses – we encounter, once again, the French ambassador Martines. Through his skilful maneuvers, he expedited John Sigismund's appointment as King of Hungary and Transylvania during the divan held on April 11, 1555, in Amasya (Asia Minor). Isabella's envoy, Ferenc Csanádi, was also present at this meeting. The sultan informed Ferdinand I about these developments, as John Sigismund's reinstatement on the Transylvanian throne was deemed necessary for concluding peace between the Ottoman Porte and the Habsburgs, whose negotiations were already underway. In the autumn of the same year, the dragoman Mahmud and the French ambassador, Jacob Cambray, were in the fortress of Lesko in Poland, where Queen Isabella had retreated from Sanok due to the plague. The two also informed Ferdinand's envoys at the queen's court about these events (Ribier, 1666, pp. 555-590; Hatvani, 1859, doc. 278-280, pp. 37-44; Veress, 1929, doc. 197, pp. 148-149; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 89 and 90, pp. 295-299; doc. 117, pp. 358-366; Veress, 1901, p. 395-396; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 468-469, 472-473).

At the beginning of 1556, Martines was once again sent on a mission to Isabella at the request of his colleague Codignac, bringing the queen letters from the sultan along with good news. These messages referred to her imminent return to Transylvania and the reinstatement of her son, John Sigismund, as prince. Before Christmas in 1555, on December 23, the

⁷ See the letter / report of the ambassadors from the Porte, Antonius Verancsics and Franciscus Zay, to Ferdinand of Habsburg (King of Hungary), dated September 25, 1554, in Szalay, 1858-1859, doc. CXIII, pp. 333-338.

Antonius (Antal) Verancsics (1504-1573) was a humanist, historiographer, prelate (provost of Alba Iulia, Transylvania; bishop of Esztergom, Hungary) and politician (royal lieutenant in Hungary), ambassador of Ferdinand I of Habsburg to Constantinople; he left behind numerous letters, reports and writings of a historical nature – Szalay, Wenzel, 1812-1891. For the humanistic and historical work of Antonius Verancsics, see Gyulai, 2021, pp. 197-212.

For an analysis of the political and military situation in Europe during these years, including the conflict between Charles V and Henry II, see Guitman, Korpás, Tóth, Szabó, 2019.

Transylvanian estates gathered in Târgu Mureș, where they openly sided with John Sigismund. In February 1556, envoys László Kemény, representing the Hungarians, János Sombori, for the Székelys, and Thomas Bomel, the notary of Sibiu, on behalf of the Saxons, officially informed King Ferdinand of this decision and asked for his approval. Without waiting for a response from the Austrians, another assembly was held in Turda after Easter, attended by the sultan's envoy. The estates formally asked Peter Petrovici to take control of Transylvania in the name of John Sigismund, whom they elected as "prince and king," declaring him their "natural lord" on March 12. Meanwhile, Queen Isabella and the prince moved their residence closer to the Hungarian border, settling in Lviv (Lvov, Lemberg; today in Ukraine), following favourable news from the Ottoman Porte and Transylvania. Given these developments, Ferdinand of Habsburg realized he could no longer retain Transylvania and thus relinquished his claims, reasoning that it was preferable for the country to be ruled again by the Szapolyai family (Christian rulers) rather than becoming a Turkish province. Isabella and John Sigismund left Lviv only on September 23, traveling through Maramureș, then Baia Mare and Dej – with the support of troops from the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia (Veress, 1929, doc. 201, 202 and 204, pp. 159-162) –, on October 22, they finally arriving in Cluj (*Chronica Civitatis Schaesburgensis*, p. 92; Ribier, 1666, pp. 637-642; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 119, pp. 375-383; doc. 122 and 123, pp. 391-399; Szilágyi, 1866, pp. 334-335; Veress, 1901, pp. 401-406, 418-422; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 473-475, 479-481, 488; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 92-95; Căzan & Denize, 2001, p. 281).⁸

Despite all the attempts between 1551 and 1556, King Ferdinand was unable to send the necessary financial and military aid to maintain Habsburg power in Transylvania. The European political and military context – his brother, Emperor Charles V's conflicts with the opposition in the Protestant German states and their ally, the French king Henry II, as well as Charles' attempt to secure the title of Holy Roman Emperor for his son, the future King Philip II of Spain, at Ferdinand's expense (Charrière, 1850, p. 133; Lőcsei, 1841, pp. 225-227; Guitman, Korpás, Tóth & Szabó, pp. 253-293; Luis de Ávila y Zúñiga, 2022) – demanded his attention and resources elsewhere. This allowed the Transylvanian supporters of the Szapolya family to bring back King John's heir and his mother.

Additionally, in the anonymous account titled *Succesi Del Hungharia del 1551*, the financial and military difficulties faced by Ferdinand's envoy in Transylvania, Gian Battista Castaldo, in maintaining control over the country are described (Cristea, 2007, pp. 5-25).

At the first assembly of the estates, convened and even opened by the queen after her return to Transylvania, held in Cluj and beginning on November 1, 1556, the dragoman Mahmud was also present. After spending three years at Isabella's court – having been sent to Poland in the spring of 1554⁹ – he returned to Adrianople, where the sultan was residing. After informing the sultan, Mahmud also presented him with a letter from the queen, in which she asked Suleiman to write to the King of France to request the hand of one of his daughters for John Sigismund. At the beginning of January 1557, a spy of Ferdinand of Habsburg informed him about the queen's request (Ribier, 1866, pp. 590-592; Veress, 1901, p. 426; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 3-4; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 95-96; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 125, pp. 402-403; Feneșan, 1997, p. 258).

⁸ For more and various details regarding the actions of the Transylvanians and the return to Transylvania of John Sigismund and Queen Isabella, see Chronik des Hieronimus Ostermayer, pp. 58-61; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 477-488; Feneșan, 1997, pp. 151-160.

Regarding the special reception in Cluj of the queen and the prince, see Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 3.

⁹ See the *Firman* of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent to the Transylvanian voivodes Ferenc Kendy and István Dobó, dated March 4-5, 1554, in Feneșan & Feneșan 2013, doc. 86, pp. 288-290; see also the letter of ambassador Michel de Codignac to King Henry II of April 3, 1554, in Ribier, 1666, p. 490; Charrière, 1850, p. 317 and Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. XVII, pp. 9-10.

As a natural consequence of the good relations between Isabella's family members and even herself with the French, who supported her even during the period in which she was, together with John Sigismund, far from Transylvania (1551-1556), the queen saw in an alliance with France and the intervention of the French ambassadors in Istanbul the possibility of recovering for Transylvania the territories occupied by the Porte in Banat and on the western border (Szilágyi, 1866, p. 338; Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 27; Veress, 1901, p. 441). Initially, attempts were made to recover some fortresses – Timișoara, Lipova, Orșova, etc. conquered by the Ottomans during the anti-Habsburg campaigns of 1551-1552 (Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 22, pp. 127-134; doc. 40, pp. 182-184; doc. 46, pp. 200-202; doc. 49, pp. 206-207; Charrière, 1850, pp. 169-170, 173, 176, 199, 201, 218, 224-225; Feneșan, 1997, pp. 147-151; Feneșan, 2014, pp. 19-22; Ágoston, 2014, p. 72; Hegyi, 2019, p. 312) – through diplomatic channels, but the Porte always refused, and finally accepted to discuss this request on the condition that the Transylvanians occupy the fortresses of Gyula (Hungary) and Oradea (Romania) themselves. The estates understood quite quickly that this was not feasible; therefore the recovery of Timișoara, Lipova, Orșova (in Banat, Romania) and Becicherec (today in Vojvodina, Serbia) was no longer in sight.¹⁰ Thus, the only solution remained to appeal to French influence.

Queen Isabella's desire to create a matrimonial alliance with France also had precedents in her Polish family. This was the case with the attempts of her mother, Bona Sforza, to achieve an alliance between France and Poland, especially after 1524, when she inherited her mother's territories in southern Italy (Bari, Rossano), which were threatened by the Papal States and the Spanish Habsburgs. Therefore, an alliance directed against the latter was important, first and foremost. Given the fact that the relationship between Queen Bona and her daughter was very close¹¹, it is likely that the queen mother also instilled in Isabella the idea of an alliance with the main enemies of the Habsburgs in Western Europe.

The rather complicated situation in which Transylvania found itself in 1558 – contributed to by the coronation of Ferdinand as Holy Roman Emperor on 14 March 1558, which increased the resources that the Austrians could put at the service of their own interests, even if these resources were sometimes not easy to mobilize, and the imperial title brought with it new problems to solve in the west (Fazekas, 2019, pp. 180-181) – meant that the French alliance was taken very seriously, its necessity extending beyond the recovery of border territories, namely to resistance against the Austrian attempts to bring Transylvania back under their control. In turn, the French saw in Transylvania an important ally against the Habsburgs, on the latter's eastern borders (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 34).

2. The Franco-Transylvanian Alliance Project of 1558

Isabella promptly appealed to the aforementioned French assistance, and they raised the issue with the Porte of restoring to Transylvania certain fortresses and territories occupied by the Turks. To support these efforts, the queen convened the Assembly of the country in early 1557, following the advice of Sultan Selim II. During this session, Christopher Báthory – a man of distinguished education and future voivode of Transylvania (1575-1581) – was appointed envoy and then sent to Paris in the autumn of the same year. His mission was to propose an alliance between France and Transylvania through the marriage of John Sigismund to a French princess. The Transylvanian envoy was well received at the French court, and the terms of the alliance were drafted swiftly. The main points were as follows: John Sigismund

¹⁰ Antonius Verancsics' letter to the Palatine of Hungary, Tamás Nádasdy, dated September 19, 1558, in Szalay, 1865, doc. XCV, p. 239; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 131, pp. 416-420; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 338; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 27-28.

¹¹ Horn, 2012, p. 43. For the relationship between Queen Isabella and her mother Queen Bona, see Veress, 1901, pp. 15-22 and Molnár, 2020, pp. 163-172.

was to marry one of Henry II's daughters; the French king was to intervene with the Ottoman Porte to secure the return of Transylvanian fortresses located on the near side of Tisza river, which had been handed over after the occupation of Buda, but later reoccupied by the Turks due to the 'cunning of Brother George'; France was to provide military aid of 5000 florins annually for five years. In the spring of 1558, Christopher Bathory returned from Paris. Accompanying him to Transylvania – via Venice, Ragusa and Belgrade – was Pierre Louis de Martines, who was sent as an ambassador (Felmer, 1780, p. 163; Szalay, 1854, p. 314; Szilágyi, 1866, pp. 338-339; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 33-34; Veress, 1901, p. 460 and footnotes 4-5, p. 460; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 258-262; Horn, 2012, footnote 238, pp. 97-98).

Regarding the financial and military aid in the alliance project, there is an inconsistency: some sources mention financial aid and 5,000 soldiers for five years (Szilágyi, 1866, p. 339), others refer to funds for maintaining 5,000 soldiers annually for five years (Veress, 1901, p. 460; Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 34), while some indicate only an annual aid of 5,000 florins for five years (Feneşan, 1997, p. 261; Horn, 2012, footnote 238, pp. 97-98).

Similarly, regarding John Sigismund's future French wife, the sources are contradictory: some claim she was to be one of Henry II's daughters (Szilágyi, 1866, p. 339; Veress, 1901, p. 460; Szalay, 1854, p. 314; Feneşan, 1997, p. 258; Horn, 2012, footnote 238, pp. 97-98), while others mention a niece (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 34) or even a sister (*sororem Regis Galliae*: Felmer, 1780, p. 163). It is possible that different people from the French royal family were considered before a final decision was made.

An obstacle arose due to the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, De la Vigne, who, upon learning about the possible marriage between John Sigismund and a French princess, questioned the necessity of the Franco-Transylvanian alliance. In a letter sent from Adrianople on December 28, 1557, he advised his sovereign not to send his own daughter to Transylvania but to consider Miss Rohan instead. He even suggested that, if necessary, her name should be changed, but with great caution (Ribier, 1666, pp. 714-715; Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 33; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 259-260).

By late spring, an imminent conflict arose with the ruler of Moldavia over the fortress of Chioar (northern Transylvania), for which he had obtained a *firman* from the Ottoman Porte. Although Isabella had promised to return the domain to him, she had no intention of complying. In response, the Moldavians attacked and plundered the Land of Bârsa (southern Transylvania). In this context, the queen convened the country Assembly in Alba Iulia between June 5 and 21, 1558. During the meeting, it was also decided to mobilize the army, with the possibility that John Sigismund would also personally participate to cleanse *Partium* of Ferdinand's allies and also to secure the success of the alliance with France. The French ambassador, Martines, was also present at the assembly, where he read the terms of the alliance project and urged an intensification of military actions against the Habsburgs. During the same assembly, some nobles – notably the Kendy brothers, Ferenc and Antal, as well as Ferenc Bebek – expressed concerns regarding the ruler's education, especially in military matters, given that he had already turned 17. As a result, they sought to reduce the queen's power and even proposed relocating her residence to Oradea, arguing that the estates could no longer support her large expenses. This move also aimed to distance the young ruler from his mother's influence. However, in July, when the army was summoned, the situation took an unexpected turn. The French ambassador attempted to mediate the internal disputes in Transylvania, aligning himself with the nobles who advocated for a greater role in the prince's education. Sándor Szilágyi suggested that these developments raised suspicions for the queen, concerns that were further reinforced by her Polish advisors. Isabella realized that the alliance with France would effectively transfer power to John Sigismund, thereby sidelining her from governance. Consequently, the alliance no longer served her interests. She refrained from mentioning it

while Martines was in Transylvania, and upon his departure, he received only vague promises (Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 34-39; doc. VIII, pp. 93-100; Veress, 1901, pp. 461-462; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 339).

It seems that the turn of events in Transylvania was favourable for the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, De Vigny, who was striving to provoke a Turkish naval attack against King Philip II of Spain on one hand, and to thwart the conclusion of a lasting peace between the Turks and the Austrians on the other. In Istanbul, a rumour circulated – spread by Bebek's men and the Kendy brothers, whom Antonius Verancics called *triumviratus pestilentissimus* [the pestilential triumvirate] –, that Isabella was negotiating with Ferdinand, an action the Turks sought to prevent, even by force. De Vigny reported this to the French court, specifically stating that he did not want France to be seen as a party to any agreement between Transylvania and the Habsburgs, should such an agreement come to fruition. As a result, Martines left the Transylvanian court for Istanbul, while Isabella sent envoys to the Porte to refute the rumours spread by the rebellious Transylvanian nobles (Szalay, 1865, p. 239; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 39-40). Reports of negotiations between Transylvania and the Austrians regarding a peace agreement appear to have been true, even though they ultimately led nowhere. During the winter of 1558-1559, amid ongoing border skirmishes where victory alternated between the two sides, negotiations began in Vienna, this time mediated by the King of Poland, Sigismund August, Isabella's brother. The Polish king, through his envoy Martin Cromer, urged Ferdinand to honour previous agreements and to grant Isabella a place where she could retire in accordance with her royal status, considering her illness. The emperor accepted the Polish proposal on the condition that Isabella's captains respect the peace and refrain from attacking Ferdinand's partisans, as has been done by the captain of the Tokaj fortress in Hungary. However, no satisfactory agreement was reached that would secure a lasting peace (Veress, 1901, pp. 460-461).

The aforementioned nobles who spread rumours unfavourable to the queen and the French alliance in Constantinople – Ferenc Bebek and the Kendy brothers – were punished after their return to Transylvania. The queen summoned them to Alba Iulia so that they could also hear the sultan's message, brought by a *çavuş*, and consult with her. On the night of September 1, 1558, the three were killed by Melchior Balassa's men – whom the queen had allied with in the meantime and whose services she used –, on the grounds that they had returned from Constantinople with poison to assassinate the queen and her son, and, if that failed, to kill them by force of arms (Szalay, 1865, doc. XCV, pp. 238-243; *Album Oltardianum 1526-1629*, pp. 23-24; Possevino, 1913, p. 86; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 40-42; Veress, 1901, pp. 462-464).

Towards the end of 1558, Isabella's health problems worsened, which led her – besides the fact that military actions were not yielding the desired results – to seek help from her brother, King Sigismund August, as previously mentioned, in order to conclude peace with the Habsburgs. Ferdinand agreed to initiate negotiations but feared that Isabella would not accept anything without the knowledge and consent of the Ottoman Porte. However, the sultan, in turn, was in favour of peace, but only for five years, whereas Isabella preferred an agreement without a time limit. This time, Ferdinand even insisted on expediting the negotiations, believing that the queen's death would not derail the process. Thus, the marriage of John Sigismund to a princess from the House of Habsburg was also reconsidered (Veress, 1901, pp. 474-476), effectively ruling out the proposed marriage to a French princess from the previous year.

In June 1559, the queen convened the Assembly of the country in Alba Iulia, particularly since Mihály Gyulai had returned from the Porte with favourable news regarding the peace negotiations with the Austrians. The estates urged the queen to immediately send a

message to Ferdinand, which she did. The Transylvanian envoys were supposed to meet with the Austrians and Poles at the Chapter of Zips (present-day Slovakia), but the peace negotiations collapsed before they could properly begin due to Ferdinand's excessively harsh demands. He insisted that Transylvania renounce all its possessions in *Partium* and cede to the Habsburgs Maramureş with Hust and the salt mines, as well as Munkács (Mukacevo, today in Ukraine), Tokaj and Kisvárdá (Hungary). However, the Turks refused to accept such terms, despite the Austrian envoys in Constantinople doing everything possible to press the issue (Veress, 1901, pp. 477-478).

Nonetheless, there was still a chance for peace between the Transylvanians and the Germans, and in this matter, French influence was evident. As early as the first part of 1559, the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, De Vigny, expressed the view that peace should be concluded between Transylvania and the Habsburgs, particularly since Ferdinand was also the Holy Roman Emperor. Thus, it was preferable for Henry II not to have him as an enemy. Additionally, De Vigny recognized the strategic importance of Transylvania for French policy in the region. The situation was also favourable due to the signing of the peace between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire on January 31, 1559, which also included Transylvania. The treaty stipulated that Isabella and John Sigismund should not be disturbed in their possessions (Veress, 1901, pp. 473, 477; Căzan & Denize, 2001, p. 286). However, the peace desired by the queen did not materialize during her lifetime.

Conclusions. Why did the Franco-Transylvanian Alliance Project Fail?

It is known that the good relations between Transylvania and France did not end with the death of Queen Isabella, being continued by her son. For example, ten years after Isabella's death, in 1569-1570, Prince John Sigismund raised the subject of his marriage to a French princess again. The situation was somewhat similar to that of 1557-1558. This time, John Sigismund was negotiating to recover the fortresses of Baia Mare, Arduş and Cehul Silvaniei from Ferdinand I of Habsburg. When the talks reached an impasse, the Transylvanians asked for help from the Turks, but the idea of a French marriage also resurfaced. The Transylvanian ambassadors to the Porte, Gaspar Békés and Mihály Gyulay, asked for the sultan's support to obtain the hand of Margaret of Valois for John Sigismund. Not only did the Turks make promises, but the Grand Vizier Sokollu also sent the dragoman Mahmud to King Charles IX in Paris. The marriage would have been an additional argument in favour of John Sigismund's claim to the Polish throne. But it seems that the Viennese origins of the renegade Mahmud had an influence, and he did not take his mission seriously; instead, he maintained relations with Emperor Maximilian II. Thus, this attempt also ended without result (Hurmuzaki, 1891, doc. DLXXII, pp. 590-591; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 272, 274; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 262-263).

Let us return to the reasons why the alliance plan of 1558 did not materialize. Several components of the reason or reasons that led to the abandonment of the alliance with France can be observed. First of all, there is the coronation of Ferdinand of Habsburg as Holy Roman Emperor on March 14, 1558, which also prompted King Henry II to no longer wish to prolong the conflict with him. Then, there was the peace concluded between the Porte and the Holy Roman Emperor on January 31, 1559, which also included Transylvania. Thirdly, with the peace between the Transylvanians and the Austrians, the idea of John Sigismund's marriage to a princess of the House of Habsburg could be revived, which would have further strengthened peace and understanding in the long term. The fact that the Franco-Habsburg and Ottoman-Habsburg conflicts had died down, at least temporarily, also led to the cessation of hostilities between the Transylvanians and the Austrians, making the envisaged alliance between France and Transylvania – explicitly directed against the Habsburgs – lose its initial strategic value.

After the discussions of 1558, it was no longer mentioned, and negotiations with the French were replaced by those with Ferdinand and Maximilian of Habsburg.

The opinion that the queen did not want to leave the reins of the country's leadership in the hands of her son and for this reason, did not agree to the proposed alliance (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 39; Horn, 2012, p. 86) seems to have a real basis, although the illness from which Isabella had been suffering for some time had removed her from the political scene. She had even begun to show disinterest in the affairs of the country, increasingly leaving these problems to the young John Sigismund, the queen striving to participate only in receiving ambassadors and celebrations (Veress, 1901, p. 469).

However, to take this reason into account, a more detailed analysis is needed, and a few things need to be pointed out. At the time, there was a trend against those who came from abroad and reached a position of power – a well-known example would be Bishop George Martinuzzi, hated by many Transylvanian nobles. In the case of women, it was even 'more serious' if, on top of that, they had a Renaissance education. This was, for example, the situation of Queen Isabella's mother, Bona Sforza – who received an education in history and law and spoke fluently, along with Italian, Latin, and Spanish –, who was criticized both in Poland and in Hungary. She was said to be a witch, a creator of poisons, and to have had countless lovers. Isabella, daughter of the Polish king Sigismund the Elder and the aforementioned Italian princess, was raised and educated by her mother, from whom she would have acquired her character, customs, and lifestyle. Some contemporaries, mainly partisans of the Hungarian kings of the House of Habsburg, describe Isabella as corrupt, scheming, easily influenced by foreign advisors (primarily by the Polish ones, but also by the envoys of the Ottoman Porte), greedy for power, and she was accused of not taking into account the interests of the Hungarians. Because she was a widow, she could no longer fulfil the 'position' of a bad-advising wife. Of these accusations, the one that hurt her most was probably the accusation that she had been a bad mother and that because of the education she imposed on John Sigismund, he did not become a ruler as expected. Finally, it is very likely that some accusations and descriptions were projected from her mother. Even if these negative opinions come either from private correspondence or from writings subsequent to the queen's death, they were certainly based on certain stories and rumours that had been circulating since Isabella's lifetime. However, there are also numerous contemporaries who are positive about Isabella's way of being, praising her vast culture, elegance, pleasant character, as well as the courage with which she faced her fate, which had become difficult after the occupation of Buda by the Turks (1541) (Veress, 1901, pp. 38, 45-47, 54-56, 65, 72-74; Steinmacher, 2015, pp. 355-357; Oborni, 2009, pp. 21-43; Horn, 2012, pp. 39-55; Molnár, 2020, pp. 163-172).¹²

Beyond the malice spread by some opponents and the image of a woman eager for power, Isabella was also perceived outside the country as a person with prestige and an active role on the political scene of the time, this also resulting from the inclusion in *Süleymānnāme* (*History of Suleiman*, written around 1558 by Arifi) of an image in which the queen with the child John Sigismund in her arms stands before the sultan in the imperial tent, near the Buda fortress. The image also suggests the power and greatness of the sultan. It is also worth noting that other contemporaries write that the minor John Sigismund was taken before Suleiman by his nanny and not by Isabella (Mroziejewicz, 2020, p. 86). Isabella's desire to exercise power in the country was certainly influenced and fuelled by the fact that until 1556, upon her return to Transylvania from Polish exile, she was not in charge of state affairs, because the reins of power were in the hands of Brother George – bishop of Oradea, treasurer and deputy

¹² For detailed information regarding members of Queen Isabella's wider family and their influence on her and John Sigismund, see Horn, 2012, pp. 39-55.

(*locumtenens*) of John Sigismund, the elected king of Hungary – who in 1551 had already handed over the country to Archduke Ferdinand (Papo, Németh, 2012, pp. 57-66; Oborni, 2020). Only after returning to Transylvania in the autumn of 1556, to whose achievement the rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia also made their military contribution at the Sultan's command (Szilágyi, 1866, pp. 330-335; Benda, 1944, p. 41), and certain aspects being mentioned above, was the moment favourable for Isabella to effectively exercise power, even if in the name of her still minor son. In the Assembly of the country held between November 25 and December 7, 1556 in Cluj, the estates placed the entire leadership in the hands of Isabella – the legally crowned queen of Hungary –, as regent with full powers until her son John Sigismund came of age (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 5; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 335; Oborni, 2009, p. 23).

As a result of these descriptions and “images” of Isabella, one must seriously consider – in addition to the other reasons listed – the possibility that her desire to retain power led to the loss of interest in allying with a great European power, such as France.

References:

Printed sources:

- Charrière, E. (1850). *Négociations de la France dans le Levant, Tome II* [Negotiations of France in the Levant, Volume II]. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale. URL: <https://archive.org/details/ngociationsdel02charuoft/page/n5/mode/2up> (Retrieved March 29, 2025).
- De Ávila y Zúñiga, L. (2022). *A császár háborúja Németországban* [The Emperor's war in Germany] (Guitman, B., Ed. & Trans.). Budapest: R E C I T I.
- De Hurmuzaki, E. (1891). *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor* [Documents concerning the history of the Romanians] (Vol. II/1, 1451-1575). București.
- De Hurmuzaki, E. (1894). *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor* [Documents concerning the history of the Romanians] (Vol. II/4, 1531-1552). București.
- Felmer, M. (1780). *Prima lineae M. Principatus Transsilvania historiam antiqui, medii et recentioris aevi exhibentes et illustrantes* [First outlines of the history of the Principality of Transylvania in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Times]. Cibinii: Typis Barthianis. URL: <https://archive.org/details/primalineaeempr00felmgooq/page/n7/mode/2up> (Retrieved March 30, 2025).
- Feneșan, C., & Feneșan, C. (2013). *Transilvania între Habsburgi și Poarta Otomană la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea (documente din arhiva Cancelariei de Stat de la Viena). Siebenbürgen Zwischen Habsburg und der Pforte um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts (Dokumente aus dem Archiv der Wiener Staatskanzlei)* [Transylvania between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Porte at the middle of the 16th Century. Documents from the State Chancellery Archive in Vienna]. Timișoara: Cosmopolitan-Art.
- Forgách, F. (1982). *Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról Ferdinánd, János, Miksa királysága és II. János erdélyi fejedelemsége alatt* [Memories about the status of Hungary under the reign of Kings Ferdinand, John and Maximilian and the Transylvanian reign of Prince John II]. A válogatás, szöveggondozás, a szövegmagyarázatok összeállítása és az utószó Kulcsár Péter munkája [Edition by Kulcsár P.]. (I. Borzák, Trans.). Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó.

- Goebel, J., & Wachsmann, G. (1840). *Chronica Civitatis Schaesburgensis 1514–1663* [Chronicle of the city of Sighișoara 1514–1663]. In G. J. Kemény (Ed.), *Deutsche Fundgruben der Geschichte Siebenbürgens* [German treasures for the history of Transylvania] (Vol. II, pp. 85–140). Klausenburg: Verlag von J. Tilsch und Sohn Buchhändler.
- Hatvani (Horváth), M. (1858). *Magyar történelmi okmánytár, a Brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból* [Hungarian historical document collection from the National Archives in Brussels and the Burgundian Library] (Vol. II, 1538-1553). Pest.
- Hatvani (Horváth), M. (1859). *Magyar történelmi okmánytár, a Brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból* [Hungarian historical document collection from the National Archives in Brussels and the Burgundian Library] (Vol. III, 1553-1608). Pest.
- Károlyi, Á. (1881). *Codex epistolaris Fratris Georgii: Frater György levelezése: 1535-1551*. [The Epistolary Codex of brother George: The correspondence of Frater György: 1535–1551]. Budapest: Az Athenaeum R. Társulat Könyvnyomdája.
- Löcsei, S. S. (1841, July 20). Magyar régiségek. Isabella Királynénak, Hruztánhoz, II-k. Szolimán Török Császár Fő Hadi Vezérjéhez írott Levele [Hungarian antiquities: The letter written by Queen Isabella to Hruztan, the Grand Vizier of Sultan Soliman II]. *Hon és Külföld*, 225-227. URL: https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/HonEsKulfold_1841/?pg=226&layout=s (Retrieved March 27, 2025).
- Ostermayer, H. (1839). *Chronik des Hieronimus Ostermayer* [Chronicle of Hieronimus Ostermayer]. In G. J. Kemény (Ed.), *Fundgruben der Geschichte Siebenbürgens* [Treasures of the history of Transylvania] (Vol. I, pp. 1–68). Klausenburg: Verlag von J. Tilch und Sohn Buchhändler.
- Possevino, A. (1913). *Transilvania (1584)* [Transylvania (1584)]. In A. Veress (Ed.), *Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum* (Vol. III). Kolozsvár: Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum.
- Ribier, G. (1666). *Lettres et memoires d'estat, des roys, princes, ambassadeurs, et autres ministers, sous les regnes de Francois premier, Henry II, et Francois II. Tome Second* [Letters and State Memoirs of Kings, Princes, Ambassadors, and Other Ministers during the Reigns of Francis I, Henry II, and Francis II. Volume II]. Chez I. Hotot; distributed by Francois Clovzier. Printed in Blois, published in Paris.
- Original held at *Lucian Blaga* Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca, Special Collections, C.V.3835. Available online: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_qWTswSr32NYC/page/n3/mode/2up (Retrieved March 20, 2025)
- Szilágyi, S. (1876a). *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae: Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* [Parliamentary records of the Principality of Transylvania] (Vol. I, 1540-1556). Budapest: A M. Tud. Akadémia Könyvkiadó.
- Szilágyi, S. (1876b). *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae: Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* [Parliamentary records of the Principality of Transylvania]. (Vol. II, 1556-1576). Budapest: A M. Tud. Akadémia Könyvkiadó.
- Szalay, L. (1858-1859). Verancics Antal összes munkái [The complete works of Antonius Verancsics] (Vol. III, 1553-1554). *Monumenta Hungariae Historica: Scriptores IV: Magyar történelmi emlékek. Második osztály: Irók, IV*. Pest. URL: <https://archive.org/details/verancicsantal03vera> (Retrieved March 10, 2025).

- Szalay, L. (1865). Verancics Antal összes munkái [The complete works of Antonius Verancsics] (Vol. VII, 1549-1559). *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Scriptores X. Magyar történelmi emlékek. Második osztály: Írók, X.* Pest. URL: <https://archive.org/details/verancsicsantal07vera/page/n5/mode/2up> (Retrieved March 10, 2025).
- Szalay L., & Wenzel, G. (1812-1891). *Verancics Antal összes munkái* [The complete works of Antonius Verancsics] (Vol. I-XII). *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Scriptores. Magyar történelmi emlékek. Második osztály: írók.* Pest / Budapest.
- Tocilescu, G. G., & Odobescu, A. I. (1886). *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor* [Documents concerning the history of the Romanians] (Suppl. I, Vol. I, 1518-1780). București.
- Veress, A. (1929). *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești. Volumul I. Acte și scrisori (1527-1572)* [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Valachia. Volume I. Acts and Letters]. București: Cartea Românească.
- Von Trauschenfels, E. (Ed.). (1860). *Album Oltardianum 1526–1629*. In *Deutsche Fundgruben zur Geschichte Siebenbürgens [German treasures for the History of Transylvania]* (New Series, Vol. III, pp. 5–49). Kronstadt: Druch und Verlag von Johann Gött.

Books and studies:

- Ágoston, G. (2014). *Európa és az Oszmán hódítás* [Europe and the Osman Conquer]. Budapest: HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum.
- Benda, K. (1944). Erdély politikai kapcsolatai a román vajdaságokkal a XVI. és XVII. Században [Political relations of Transylvania with the Walachian Voivodships in the 15th and 16th Centuries]. *A Magyar Történettudományi Intézet Évkönyve, II*, 35-73.
- Căzan, I., & Denize, E. (2001). *Marile puteri și spațiul românesc în secolele XV-XVI* [The Great Powers and the Romanian region in the 15th-16th centuries]. București: Editura Universității din București.
- Cristea, O. (2007). Succesi del Hungharia del 1551: Lupta pentru Transilvania (1551-1552) într-un izvor contemporan inedit [The successes from Hungary from 1551: The fight for Transylvania (1551-1552) in a contemporary unpublished source]. *Revista istorică, XVIII*(1-2), 5-25.
- Makkai L., & Mócsy A. (1986). *Erdély története. Első kötet: A kezdetektől 1606-ig* [The history of Transylvania. First volume: From the beginnings to 1606]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Fazekas, I. (2019). The Central European Habsburg Monarchy in the middle of the sixteenth century: Elements of cohesion and division. In P. Fodor (Ed.), *The battle for Central Europe: The siege of Szigetvár and the death of Süleyman the Magnificent and Nicholas Zrinyi (1566)* (pp. 179-192). Budapest: Research Centre for Humanities. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Felezeu, C. (1996). *Statutul Principatului Transilvaniei în raporturile cu Poarta Otomană (1541-1688)* [The statute of the Principality of Transylvania in its relations with the Ottoman Porte (1541-1688)]. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Feneșan, C. (1997). *Constituirea principatului autonom al Transilvaniei* [The establishment of the autonomous Principality of Transylvania]. București: Editura Enciclopedică.

- Feneşan, C. (2014). *Vilayetul Timișoara (1552-1716)* [The Vilayet of Timișoara]. Timișoara: Editura Ariergarda.
- Guitman, B., Korpás, Z., Tóth, F. B., & Szabó, J. (2019). A magyarországi török várháborúk nemzetközi háttere, 1547-1556 [The international background of the Hungarian Castle Wars]. *Világtörténet*, 9(41) / 2, 253-293.
- Gyulai, É. (2021). Két udvar vonzásában: A historikus Verancsics Antal [In the attraction of two Courts: the historical Antonius Verancsics]. In E. Békés, P. Kasza & G. Kiss Farkas (Eds.), *Latin nyelvű udvari kultúra Magyarországon a 15-18. században* [The Latin court culture in Hungary in the 15th-18th centuries] (pp. 197-212). Szeged: Lazi Kiadó.
- Hegyi, K. (2019). Ottoman defence system in Hungary. In P. Fodor (Ed.), *The battle for Central Europe. The siege of Szigetvár and the death of Süleyman the Magnificent and Nicholas Zrinyi (1566)* (pp. 309-319). Budapest: Research Center for Humanities. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Horn, I. (2012). *A hatalom pillérei: A politikai elit az Erdélyi Fejedelemség megszilárdulásának korszakában (1556-1588)* [The pillars of power: The political elite during the era of the strengthening of the Principality of Transylvania]. Budapest: Akadémiai doktori értekezés.
- Horváth, M. (1872). *Utyeszenich Frater György (Martinuzzi bibornok) élete* [The life of brother George Utyeszenich (Bishop Martinuzzi)]. Pest: Kiadja Ráth Mór.
- Marczali, H. (1935). *Erdély története* [History of Transylvania]. Budapest: Káldor Könyvkiadóvállalat.
- Molnár, M. F. (2020). Isabella and her italian connections. In A. Máté & T. Oborni (Eds.), *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)* (pp. 163-172). Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities.
- Mroziewicz, K. (2020). The sixteenth-century depictions of Isabella Jagiellon and their reception in Poland and Hungary. In A. Máté & T. Oborni (Eds.), *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)* (pp. 77-101). Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities.
- Oborni, T. (2009). Izabella királyné erdélyi udvarának kezdetei (1541-1551) [The beginnings of the Transylvanian court of Queen Isabella]. *Történelmi Szemle*, LI(1), 21-43.
- Oborni, T. (2020). *Georgius Monachus contra Reginam: Queen Isabella and her reign over the Eastern Kingdom of Hungary (1541-1551)*. In A. Máté & T. Oborni (Eds.), *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)* (pp. 209-234). Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities.
- Papo, A., & Németh, G. (2012). György Martinuzzi Utyeszenics, primo principe di Transilvania? [George Martinuzzi Utyeszenics, the First Prince of Transylvania?]. In V. Dáné, T. Oborni & G. Sipos (Eds.), „... éltünk mi sokáig két hazában...”. *Tanulmányok a 90 éves Kiss András tiszteletére*, [Studies in Honour of András Kiss at his 90th Birthday] (pp. 57-66). Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó / Debrecen University Press.
- Steinmacher, K. (2015). Az idegenből jött uralkodónő, Jagelló Izabella (1519-1559) alakja a magyar kulturális emlékezetben [Isabella Jagiellon's, the Ruler come from Abroad, Depiction in the Hungarian Cultural Memory]. *Publicationis Universitatis Miskolciensis, Sectio Philosophica*, XIX(1), 353-368.
- Szalay, L. (1854). *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary] IV. Lipcse: Geibel Károly tulajdona.

- Szalay, L. (1859). *Adalékok a magyar nemzet történetéhez a XVI-dik században* [Contributions to the history of the Hungarian nation in the 16th century]. Pest: Ráth Mór.
- Szádeczky, L. (1888). *Izabella és János Zsigmond Lengyelországban. 1552-1556. Levéltári források alapján* [Isabella and John Sigismund in Poland. 1552-1556. Based on archival sources]. Budapest: Kiadja a Hg. Czartoryski alapítványból a M. T. Akadémia.
- Szilágyi, S. (1866). *Erdélyország története* [History of Transylvania]. I. Pest: Kiadja Heckenast Gusztáv.
- Veress, E. (1901). *Izabella királyné 1519-1559* [Queen Isabella 1519-1559]. Budapest: A Magyar Történelmi Társulat Kiadása.

THE GERMAN FREEMASON SETTLERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREEMASONRY IN BANAT IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES¹

Attila VARGA

The Romanian Academy, George Barițiu Institute of History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

e-mail: atyvarga@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study underlines the fact that Freemasonry, brought to Banat by the Austrian settlers, did not leave this area as an isolated provincialism. It was in direct contact with the Central European elite, exchanging ideas and experiences. At that time, Freemasonry facilitated the access of representatives of the small and middle bourgeoisie, merchants, entrepreneurs, military and civil servants, creating a real community outside the traditional structures. This was also the case in Banat in the 19th century. The Masonic lodges of this period continued the inherited Masonic tradition, carrying on the elitist spirit brought by the Austrian colonists in the previous period. In the 19th century, two lodges in the Mountains Banat, continued this Austrian Masonic tradition. These were the Lodge 'Glück auf' in Oravița and the Lodge 'Licht und Wahrheit' in Reșița. Both contributed significantly to the complex process of modernisation of Banat society, but also to the success of the Romanian national movement during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Keywords: Banat; Freemasonry; elites; colonists; lodges; modernisation.

1. Introduction: The transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry in Europe (18th century).

At the beginning of the 18th century, the creation of the United Grand Lodge of England, *Mother of the World*, marked the first major step in the transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry. In other words, the place of the stonemasons, builders of Gothic cathedrals, was taken by intellectuals and philosophers, and the guilds were replaced by temples of Masonic brothers. They claimed to be the successors of the old medieval guilds (Fay, 1961, pp. 75-76).

It was also at this time, at the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, that Freemasonry began to spread to different parts of the world. The aforementioned United Grand Lodge of England, the *Mother of the World*, played an important role in this. At that time, London was already a commercial and financial metropolis, and its relations with many European port cities were also strengthened by the political influence of Great Britain over northern and Mediterranean Europe. Thus, the main 'axes' of the spread of speculative Freemasonry in Europe were as follows:

1. Northern Axis - The first areas of contact with the influence of British Freemasonry were the northern countries, namely the Netherlands. It was under British economic

¹ Article History: Received: 23.12.2024. Accepted: 19.02.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

- tutelage, then the northern German cities of Hamburg and Hanover (Thual, 1994, pp. 22).
2. Western European axis - In France, the rise of speculative Freemasonry was due to the immigration of the Stuarts and the classic expansion of English Freemasonry. By 1730 there were already important lodges in Paris, Saint-Germain-en Laye, Bordeaux and Toulouse. Freemasonry in this area was an urban phenomenon, and now, in the first half of the 18th century, it could not be separated from the widespread Anglomania (Thual, 1994, p. 42).
 3. Iberian Axis - Portugal, a British colony, accepted the principles of Freemasonry among its elite in the 18th century. In Spain, the first Masonic lodge appeared in Madrid in 1728. Later, between 1748 and 1765, Masonic activities also took place in Barcelona, under British obedience (Thual, 1994, p. 42).
 4. Baltic Axis - this area included the Kingdom of Denmark, which at the time exercised influence over Norway, Iceland and Greenland, and the Russian Empire. The latter, through its Baltic façade, was in contact with the English world: through Riga and St. Petersburg, British Freemasonry spread to several cities (Thual, 1994, p. 36).
 5. Central European Axis - during this period, the Viennese Court also extended its influence into Belgium, which was linked to England by the North Sea. Thus the Habsburg Empire came into contact with British Freemasonry through the regions of present-day Belgium (Thual, 1994, pp. 37. See also Varga, 2013, pp. 14-15).

2. Freemasonry and Austrian Colonisations in the Banat Mountains (18th century)

In the first half of the 18th century in Banat, or rather in the Banat Mountains, the framing trade entered the *Austrian channel*. This is connected with the first wave of colonisation that took place between 1718 and 1740. After the end of the war between the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice in 1714-1718 and the conclusion of the Treaty of Passarowitz in 1718, the Court of Vienna took control of Serbia and Banat. It became part of the Habsburg Empire (Ehrler, 2006).

Banat was divided into 13 counties. Each district was headed by an administrator, assisted by a deputy. The powers of these administrators included the collection of taxes, the development of resources, the administration of justice, the maintenance of peace and the welfare of the population (Bota, 2008, p. 138). In the newly created political context, the imperial authorities sought to make the most of the province's remarkable resources and economic potential. For this reason, they pushed the boundaries of institutional and administrative modernisation in this area as well, implementing the model of a centralised bureaucracy.

In a first phase of this effort to exploit the potential of the province, the Viennese authorities began the first organised colonisation of Banat in the autumn of 1718. By 1740, between 15,000 and 40,000 German settlers had arrived. They were joined by Serbs, Bulgarians, Italians and Spaniards. These settlers had to make up for the massive population losses caused by the previous wars.

They therefore served the interests of the Austrian state and its policies. To this end, the authorities wanted to ensure good living conditions for the colonised population and started to reorganise all the villages in Banat. In the context of the administrative reorganisation of Banat and the modernisation of the region, Oravița became one of the most important mountain centres.

This centre was located in an area rich in land and subsoil resources. For this reason, in the course of time, important modernisation projects, construction works and waterworks were carried out in this place. In Oravița, such works began as early as 1720.

The area was prepared for the arrival of 456 settlers, by order of the Commission of Mountain Endowment in Timișoara. They came from Tyrol and Schmollnitz, and were given land and considerable financial support to come here (Bota, 2008, p. 155). The mining potential of the area required the training of new generations of specialists, and in 1729 the Oravița Mining School was founded. It was the first vocational school in nowadays Romania (Bota, 2008, p. 155).

Such a professional upsurge in an area rich in resources justified the presence of specialists (chartered engineers, geodesists, geologists, topographers) from the major cities of the Habsburg Empire. Some of these settler-monarchists were Freemasons. We owe to them the beginning of the Masonic movement in the area of the Mountains Banat.

3. The first prominent promoters and lodges of the Freemasonry in Banat (18th century)

A prime example is Iosif Motsidlowsky, the coordinator of the dam and hydrotechnical works at Lacul Mare. When he came to Oravița, in 1741, he was a member of the *Zu den Drei Adlern* lodge in Vienna (Bota, 2011).

Later, in 1741, the Empress Maria Theresa appointed the Augustan councillor Ferdinand Kollowrath Krakowsky (1682-1751), a member of the Viennese Freemasonry, president of the commission that established in this province an Aulic Commission for Banat, Transylvanian and Illyrian Affairs (Bota, 2008, p. 139).

In the same year, Councillor Krakowsky came to the town to inspect the situation of the communities in Banat Montan. On this occasion, he inaugurated a 'local lodge' with the status of a subordinate lodge to the one in Vienna, to which he also belonged. Therefore, the year 1741 can be considered as the date of the first documentary mention of Freemasonry in the territory of Oravița and in the Mountains Banat (Bota, 2011).

Two years later, sources mention four other Freemasons who settled in Oravița: Julius Baumann, Jacob Belgrader, Mathias Fischer and Peter Eirich senior. Julius Baumann came from the Austrian Tyrol where he had been initiated into a Scottish Masonic Lodge in Schwaz. Of Jacob Belgrader, son of the geodetic engineer Arnold Belgrader, we know that after living in the buildings of the Heraldry Office, he moved with his family into a house built by Julius Baumann, his brother-in-law. Both had married the Hoffmann sisters, daughters of a local mining entrepreneur (Bota, 2011).

Later, in 1751, the owner of the Mountain Cyclops brewery, Mathias Fischer, was initiated into the same Vienna lodge. He had been recommended by Jean-Baptiste Marie Ragon, venerable of the corresponding lodge in Constantinople, the owner of the Palanka trading system on the Danube. Together with Peter Eirich senior, owner of the Hotel *Kaiser Karl*, Mathias Fischer laid the foundations of a nucleus that became the Areopagus in 1756 (Bota, 2011).

He held the title of *Freischützen-Corps* and was under the obedience of the Lodge 'Saint Andreas zu den Drei Seeblätten' in Berlin after 1767. Until then, the Oravița Areopagus was under the protection of the venerable Pro-Grand Master of the Vienna Lodge, von Hechengarten. He was present in Oravița for many years, as an imperial advisor in the matters of the Mining Directorate and the Mining Treasury (Bota, 2011).

At the same time, Baron Maximilian Josef Linden (1736-1801), a freemason of the Vienna Lodge *Zur Hoffnung* (founded in 1770), founded a Rosicrucian Lodge in Timișoara in 1772. He had the approval of the high-ranking freemasons in Vienna, with whom he corresponded at the beginning of 1772 (Abafi, 1884). After Linden's departure from Timișoara the lodge was led by Josef Sauvaigne, then by Josef Bohoninczky, then by Baron Johann Wenzel Maria Pötting and, from 1779, again by Sauvaigne, who had meanwhile returned to

Banat (Kakucs, 2016, pp. 470). Because of the lodge's financial irregularities, Josef Sauvaigne was expelled from the Rosicrucian Order in August 1782.

Its ranks included eminent personalities: The Orthodox Bishop of Arad, Petru Pecrovici (1733-1780), the Canon of Cenad, the Bulgarian Vuko Branko de Pal (1725-1798), Gherasim Adamovici (1733-1794), who became the Orthodox Bishop of Transylvania (between 1789-1794) and Iosif Ioanovici Șacabent, the Orthodox Bishop of Vârșeț (1786-1804) (Kakucs, 2016, pp. 470). As for Joseph Sauvaigne, who was expelled from the Rosicrucians, he played an important role in the foundation and activity of the Masonic Lodge 'To the Three White Lilies', founded in Timișoara in the spring of 1776.

It received its statutes in 1780 from the Vienna Lodge 'Zu den drei Adlern'. The Timișoara Lodge belonged to the Federation of Lodges of Galicia, which was one of the 17 provincial groups of the St. John Rite in the Habsburg Empire. (Kakucs, 2016, pp. 472) The ranks of this lodge included important personalities of the time: *Josef Bohoninczky*, military adviser, *Baron Friedrich Eckhard*, chief accountant of the chamber estates in Kanizsa, *Baron Johann Wenzel Maria Pötting*, chamber adviser, *Franz Heigl*, merchant in Timișoara, *Engelbert Kirchgeher*, head of the transport service, *Baron Franz Anton Vinzenz*, court advisor, *József Ignic Muller*, accountant, chief chamberlain, *Baron Golz*, vice-colonel, commander of the Esterhazy regiment, *Baron Andreas von Basselilly* (1747-1805), administrative officer, *Ernst Nigg*, chamberlain in Lipova, *Johann Joachim Gross* (1725-1791), chief physician of Timiș county between 1756-1791, *Johann Jakob Swoboda*, administrative officer, *Baron Friedrich Willberg*, captain of the border regiment in Panciova, *Sebesteny Baron Wenzel Sauer* (1742-1799), president of the chamber administration, *Albert Wenzeslaus Karliczky* (1747-1803), director of the chamber schools, *Nikolaus Heimeyer*, chambelan in Vienna, *Baron Rehback*, president of the Lugoj chamber estates, *Janos Breauer*, chief accountant in Receaș, *Dr. Ferenc Hoffmann*, surgeon in Oravița (1769-1775), *Franz Heigl*, doctor in Bocșa, *Fülop Dellevaux*, chamber clerk, *Barzellini*, administrator of the Starhemberg rice mill (Kakucs, 2016, p. 472. See also Abafi, 1893, pp. 1-16).

The founding of the Timișoara Masonic Lodge took place shortly after the end of the second wave of colonisation in Banat, between 1744 and 1772. At that time, about 75,000 settlers arrived in Banat and made an important contribution to the development of the province. The development of the Masonic movement in Banat, since the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, also highlights the favourable context in which a professional elite, directly linked to the decision-makers in the capital of the Empire, was consolidated. Thanks to the Freemasonry brought by the Austrian settlers, who belonged to the upper class of the Austrian society, the local elite of the Banat and the Mountains Banat did not remain in an isolated provincialism. They were in direct contact with the Central European elite, exchanging ideas and experiences.

During this period, Freemasonry attracted representatives of the lower and middle bourgeoisie, merchants, businessmen, military and civil servants, creating a real community outside the traditional structures. In these lodges, modern values were reconciled with traditional landmarks, and they became veritable "laboratories of ideas". These ideas were put into practice and contributed greatly to the complex process of modernising society (Nicoară, 2005, p. 256). This was also the case in Banat in the 19th century.

4. Masonic lodges in Banat (19th century)

The Masonic lodges of this period continued the inherited Masonic tradition, carrying on the elitist spirit brought by the Austrian colonists in the previous period. In the 19th century, two lodges in the Mountains Banat, continued the Masonic tradition introduced by the Austrian Freemasons. These were the Lodge *Glück auf* in Oravița and the Lodge *Licht und Wahrheit* in Reșița.

In 1873, when it was decided to open a workshop in Reșița, there was already a flourishing Masonic activity in the Mountains Banat. This was due to the efforts of the Brethren of the 'Glück auf zu den drei Schlägeln' Lodge from Oravița. In fact, in the case of this province, this was truly the *cradle* of modern Freemasonry. In addition to the 'Glück auf' lodge, which operated under the obedience of the Hungarian Grand Lodge of the Johannite Rite, there was another important lodge, 'Kosmos'. However, it operated under another rival obedience: the Grand Orient of Hungary. Both lodges in Oravița were German-speaking, which is not surprising (Varga, 2011, pp. 69-76).

As mentioned above, there had been a large influx of German settlers here since the second half of the 18th century. They were specialists in mining, metallurgy and related trades, brought from Tyrol, Bohemia and Styria. With their help, compact and stable settlements such as *Oravița Montana* were created (Varga, 2011, pp. 69-76). The peak of Oravița's development under Austrian administration came in 1867 with the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Dualism.

Oravița continued to play an increasingly important economic and cultural role. In 1872 the weekly newspaper *Oravitzaer Wochenblatt* was published. Six years later, the 'Marilla' resort for the city's elite was built in the same area. Other important industrial developments followed (Varga, 2011, pp. 69-76). In such an economically and culturally well-developed environment, the elite of the lodge, under the obedience of the Grand Lodge of the Hungarian Ioanite Rite, considered it opportune to open a new Masonic nucleus in the neighbouring town. The circumstances were very favourable. Reșița was an industrial city in full expansion, it already had an elite middle class with progressive views.

Moreover, and more importantly, the Hungarian Grand Lodge of the Johannite Rite itself, beyond the heated polemics with its great rival on the subject of the formation of a single Grand Orient, managed to fully consolidate its own identity (Varga, 2011, pp. 69-76).

At the central level, it had secured a first-rate elite who, in the boom period that had just begun, realised that the strength of the newly formed Grand Obedience was also closely linked to the strengthening of local positions. This was also the reason for opening new workshops, especially where there was significant human potential. This was exactly what the Hungarian Grand Orient Obedience really wanted. The competition at the top between the two Grand Obediences was inevitably transferred to the local level.

Under the auspices of 'competition', the Brethren of Lodge *Glück auf zu den drei Schlägeln* realised that a lack of constructive initiative could only be to their disadvantage. It is hard to believe that the Grand Orient of Hungary did not even consider the possibility of opening a lodge in Reșița, operating according to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Such lodges also existed in Caransebeș (Lodge *Irenea*), Oravița (Lodge *Kosmos*), Vârșeț (Lodge 'Egalitas'), Biserica Albă (Lodge *Fels der Wahrheit*) (Varga, 2011, pp. 69-76). Such lodges also existed in Caransebeș (Lodge *Irenea*), Oravița (Lodge 'Kosmos'), Vârșeț (Lodge *Egalitas*), Biserica Albă (Lodge *Fels der Wahrheit*).

Under these circumstances, the Oravița Brethren decided to open a lodge in Reșița on 4 October 1873, after an event organised by the "Glück auf zu den drei Schlägeln" Lodge. It was named "Light and Truth" by the founding members, who have been associated with Reșița Lodge since 30 November. These founders were German elites: Georg Adam Heinbach, Petru

Broșteanu (intellectual), Ludwig Fessler (cashier), Stangl Scheible, Johann Pantyik (Protestant preacher), Anton Heger (baker), Alexander (Sándor) Schönberger (blacksmith) and Johann Wachlinger (clerk). The lodge was therefore predominantly German (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86).

A year later, when the 'Internal Regulations' were completed and sent to the Grand Lodge of the Hungarian Rite of St. John for approval, in addition to these eight names, the following Brethren were mentioned Alexander Williger (secretary), A. Horváth, the teacher Ion Simu and Georg Sinfelberg. All of them were initiated into Freemasonry in Oravița and received their promotions in the new lodge they founded.

In the case of the 'Licht und Wahrheit' Lodge in Reșița, these positions were filled as follows: Georg Adam Heinbach - Worshipful Master of the Lodge, Petru Broșteanu - Secretary, Ludwig Fessler - First Overseer, Stangl Scheible - Second Overseer, Johann Pantyik - Orator, Anton Heger - Treasurer, Alexander Schönberger - Master of Ceremonies, Johann Wachlinger - Archivist (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86).

From the moment these documents were sent to the Grand Lodge of the Hungarian Rite of St. John, the 'Licht und Wahrheit' Lodge of Reșița operated under a provisional status. Due to the fact that a large part of the documents in the lodge's archives have been lost, it's not possible to say exactly when the Reșița Lodge received permission to operate. It could have come in the first months of 1874 (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86).

Although we do not yet know the exact location of the historic headquarters of the 'Licht und Wahrheit' Lodge, we do know that it was not a very comfortable and spacious location, and that the conditions there were very poor. In a detailed report sent to the Grand Lodge of Budapest on 13 October 1875, it is made very clear that the lodge had a major problem with the storage of its archives that year, with that many of the important papers being gnawed on by rats (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86).

5. Masonic activity in the Banat in word and deed (19th century)

Based on the idea of tolerance, Freemasonry has, since the beginning of the modern era, been able to offer a real alternative that challenges traditional structures. This is all the more so because, as has already been said, it promotes the internal application of fraternal equality, i.e. the appreciation of man according to his just value, despite the different social conditions of its members. Internally, therefore, rank, wealth, social position, religion or nationality were of little importance. Tolerance was the glue of a secret world that produced true elites. This was also true of the lodge in Reșița.

As stated in a letter sent to the Grand Lodge of Budapest on 14 July 1875 concerning the Freemasons of Reșița: "As regards the cultural level of our fellow citizens, we can say that they are educated people who have a healthy view of the world and of the conditions in which they live." (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86). Throughout the second half of the 19th century, their concerns did not exclude projects aimed at the economic development of a province with extraordinary potential.

As Georg Adam Heinbach himself admitted in a letter of 1880:

The Banat region is fortunate to have a railway network that is a constantly developing (...) I have travelled through the Banat region from one end to the other and have had the pleasure of observing a land inhabited by many nations living in harmony and good understanding. The area has unlimited economic potential, which is being exploited by the presence and work of an industrious population. In order to make better use of the land and subsoil resources, the railway network, which is well maintained but still underdeveloped compared to the economic potential waiting to be tapped, should be extended. (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86)

The project to build a railway between Reșița and Dognecea was supported by the Brethren of the Lodge 'Licht und Wahrheit' from the beginning of 1874. The same Georg Adam Heinbach admits that:

at the beginning of 1874 I started to work as an engineer at the k. & k. St. E. G. Vienna. My work took me to Reșița and Dognecea. During our weekly trips we became aware of the need to build a secondary railway line between these two towns. This would bring innumerable economic benefits to the region and facilitate communication within the Imperial Government's postal system. One of the supporters of my idea was my mentor, the Worshipful Master of Reșița, Johann Pantyik. He prepared me for promotion to the leading ranks of the Hungarian Grand Lodge of the Johannite Rite. (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86)

The idea itself was very popular. Between 1868 and 1870, an industrial horse-drawn railway was built between Reșița and Secu, with a length of 12.3 km. It was later converted to steam traction and opened on 26 July 1871. At the same time, during this period, the internal railway network of the Reșița factories was extended and reconstructed, providing connections with the warehouses and workshops of the factory (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86).

In 1871, the construction of the industrial railway line began on the Reșița-Bocșa Română-Ocna de Fier section, which was inaugurated on 3 September 1873. This was the link with the mining activities in the Bocșa area. However, apart from the ambitious projects of the Freemasons of Reșița aimed at the economic development of the province, a number of challenges remained within the organisation, which could hardly be solved in time (Varga, 2011, pp. 77-86).

6. Petru Broșteanu (1838-1920), dominant personality of the Masonic movement in Banat

One of them was the involvement of the Masonic movement in the Banat Mountains in the support of the Romanian national cause. This involvement was mainly through a scholar, member of the Romanian Academy and Freemason in the Reșița Lodge. It is the famous Germanist Petru Broșteanu. He was secretary of the Austro-Hungarian Railway Society, working for the magazines *Romänische Revue* and *Rumänische Jahrbücher* (1886-1889), mainly as a translator (Rusu, 2003, p. 144).

He worked extensively on the publication of *Romänische Revue* (Reșița-Budapest-Vienna, 1885-1891). One of Petru Broșteanu's most important intellectual achievements was the translation from German into Romanian of Heinrich Franche's voluminous work on the Emperor Trajan. It was published in fascicles in Brașov in 1895 by the author's own publishing house. As a Freemason, Petru Broșteanu distinguished himself as a prominent member of the *Licht und Wahrheit* Lodge in Reșița. He was initiated into Freemasonry on 26 February 1872 in the *Glückauf* Lodge in Oravița and quickly received his three degrees (Zaberca, 1999, pp. 14-18).

On 24 June 1872 he was already awarded the rank of a Master. Thanks to this fact, from 1872 to 1876, Petru Broșteanu held the high dignity of Deputy Worshipful Master of the Reșița Lodge. (Zaberca, 1978, pp. 87-90). Most of the documents of the Lodge were kept and signed by him. From their contents the figure of an extremely active and committed Freemason emerges.

He was a very good organiser and most of the solutions to the administrative problems of the lodge in Reșița were due to him. He travelled extensively, including the Carpathians, on various missions which inevitably brought him into closer contact with the Romanian political elite. By his own admission, he had already undertaken a mission to Bucharest in 1878. Then he found a place to live, a job, he integrated very well into the daily life of the city and, above

all, he carried out the instructions given to him by the Grand Master of the Hungarian Grand Lodge of the Johannite Rite (Zaberca, 1978, pp. 87-90).

These were not the most favourable times for the ideals and demands passionately supported by the Romanian elite in Transylvania. His correspondence with the great man of culture George Barițiu took place at a time when the Romanian political elite was preparing to issue the famous *Memorandum* of 1881. It is linked to the *memorandum* movement that began towards the end of Austro-Hungarian dualism. The Hungarian political elite then succeeded in repealing the laws passed by the Transylvanian Parliament (Diet) of Sibiu in 1863-1865. The latter recognised the Romanians as a fourth nation with political, cultural and ecclesiastical rights equal to those of the historical Transylvanian nations, and Transylvania preserved its territorial autonomy (Zaberca, 1978, pp. 87-90).

The repeal of these decisions and the recognition of Transylvania's union with Hungary provoked a swift reaction from the Romanians. The Transylvanians declared themselves passive and abstained from the elections. They sought the support of the Emperor against Budapest for the restoration of Transylvania's autonomy, with all the consequences of the laws of 1863-1865.

The Romanians from the Banat and from Hungary, who were outside the borders of Transylvania (autonomous province before 1867), followed a policy of active participation in the elections and in the work of the parliament in Budapest. They believed that supporting the separatist Kosuthist movement (supported by the Hungarian emigration) would lead to an independent Hungary. Therefore, the Romanians had to win the freedoms they wanted, either in good agreement with the Hungarian governments or with the support of the other nationalities (Zaberca, 1978, pp. 87-90). George Barițiu was entrusted with the drafting of this political document, entitled *Memorial composed and published by order of the General Conference of the Representatives of the Romanian Voters assembled in Sibiu on 12, 13 and 14 May 1881*.

Together with Vincențiu Babeș and Ioan Rațiu, he chaired the Sibiu meeting. (Zaberca, 1978, pp. 87-90) The memoirs were printed in 1882 in four languages (Romanian - 2000 copies), French (750 copies), Hungarian (700 copies) and German (600 copies). They were to be sent to leading European political figures, magazines and newspapers, academies, universities, scientific, cultural and literary institutions as an indictment of dualism (Varga, 2011, pp. 88-94). Petru Broșteanu was also involved and he welcomed the idea of distributing the material in Western European countries (Varga, 2011, pp. 88-94).

In a letter dated 11 January 1882, Petru Broșteanu informed George Barițiu that he had met the rector of the Royal Gymnasium in Tübingen, Dr. Ramsler, in Karlsbad. According to sources, the German professor spoke sympathetically about the Romanians and knew a lot about the Daco- and the Macedonian Romanians. The author of the letter stressed that Rector Ramsler could be persuaded to defend the cause of the Romanians and the 'Memorial' of 1881 in the German press. George Barițiu agreed with this initiative, as evidenced by the fact that Petru Broșteanu thanked him in another letter for the copies he had sent (Varga, 2011, pp. 88-94).

In addition, Petru Broșteanu published an article in German, as shown in another letter to Barițiu dated 30 November 1882. He mentioned that the aim of the article was to draw attention to the Memorandum and to the identity of the Romanian struggle with that of the Transylvanian German-Saxons. In the struggle for the social and national liberation of the Romanian people, Petru Broșteanu said, all means must be used and all possibilities exhausted. He said with conviction: 'I would ally myself with Satan and descend to hell if only I could find there the remedy for the wound of the nation, for the salvation of our nation' (Varga, 2011, pp. 88-94).

Petru Broșteanu was determined to act decisively to spread the aspirations of the Romanians of Transylvania and Banat throughout the continent.

Besides Petru Broșteanu, another illustrious Mason of the Light and Truth Lodge corresponded with George Barițiu. He is the already known teacher Ion Simu. George Barițiu received similar letters from other parts of Banat, which clearly shows that the local elite was animated by deep patriotic feelings. In time, it reached its political maturity, and in the complicated process of social modernisation in the 19th century, the Masonic movement in Banat played a central role.

Conclusions

In Banat, i.e. in the Banat Mountains, Freemasonry entered the “Austrian channel” in the first half of the 18th century, an aspect that must be correlated with the first wave of colonisation that took place between 1718 and 1740. The Masonic lodges of this period (the Oravița and Timișoara lodges) continued the Austrian Masonic tradition.

They continued the elitist spirit brought by the settlers from the Habsburg Empire in the previous period. In the 19th century, in the Banat Mountains, two lodges continued this Masonic tradition introduced by the Austrian Masonic settlers. These were the Lodge ‘Glück auf’ in Oravița and the Lodge *Licht und Wahrheit* in Reșița. Based on the idea of tolerance, Freemasonry has been able to offer a real alternative to traditional structures since the beginning of the modern era.

This is all the more so because, as shown in our study, Freemasonry promoted the internal application of fraternal equality, that is, the appreciation of the human person according to his fair value, despite the different social conditions of its members. Throughout the second half of the 19th century, its concern did not exclude projects for the economic development of a province with extraordinary potential.

The idea of building a railway between Reșița and Dognecea was supported by the Brethren of the *Licht und Wahrheit* Lodge as early as 1874. Apart from economic projects, the involvement of the Masonic movement in the Banat Mountains in supporting the Romanian national cause was significant. This involvement was mainly through a scholar, member of the Romanian Academy and Freemason of the Reșița Lodge, namely Petru Broșteanu.

With the support of the Reșița Lodge, he opened up the Romanian national movement to the German academic and Masonic world in the second half of the 19th century, polarising the local elite on the side of the Romanian cause. His famous memoirs were published in 1882. They were subsequently sent to leading European political figures, magazines and newspapers, academies, universities, scientific, cultural and literary institutions as an indictment of Austro-Hungarian dualism.

Therefore, the Freemasonry was brought to Banat by the Austrian settlers during the Age of Enlightenment, which opened up new perspectives for strengthening the bridges between the local elite and the Central-Eastern European elite. The Austrian Freemasonry developed in this province became a vector of influence with a central role in the complicated process of modernisation of the Banat society.

References:

I. Editions of documents

Varga, A., & Cristian, R. (2011). *Documenta Masonica Transylvanica et Banatica. Loja „Licht und Wahrheit” din Reșița* [Documenta Masonica Transylvanica et Banatica. Lodge ‘Licht und Wahrheit’ in Reșița]. Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut.

Varga, A. (2013). *Documenta Masonica Hungarica. Frontispieces and Stamps, I*. Cluj-Napoca, Gatineau: Argonaut / Symphologic Publishing.

II. Books

Abafi, L. (1893). *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Osterreich-Ungarn, IV*. Budapest, Hungary: Ludwig Aigner.

Fay, B. (1961). *La franc-maçonnerie et la révolution intellectuelle du XVIIIème siècle*. Paris.

Thual, F. (1994). *Géopolitique de la Franc-Maçonnerie*. Paris: s.n.

Rusu, D. N. (2003). *Membrii Academiei Române, 1866-2003* [Members of the Romanian Academy, 1866-2003]. București: Editura Enciclopedică.

Nicoară, S. (2005). *O istorie a secularizării. De la Cetatea lui Dumnezeu la cetatea oamenilor (sec. XIV-XVIII)* [A history of secularisation. From the Citadel of God to the Citadel of Men (14th-18th centuries)], *I*. Cluj-Napoca: Accent.

Ehrler, J. J. (2006). *Banatul de la origini până acum (1774)* [Banat from its origins to the present day (1774)]. Timișoara: Editura de Vest.

Bota, I. (2008). *Monografia orașului Oravița* [Monograph of the city of Oravița]. Reșița: Editura TIM.

III. Studies

Abafi, L. (1884). *Titkos társulatok Temesvárott a múlt században* [Secret societies in Timisoara in the last century]. *Történelmi Tár* [Historical Repository], *I*(3).

Zaberca, V. M., & Leu, V. (1978). *Din corespondența bănățenilor cu George Barițiu* [From the correspondence of Banat people with George Barițiu]. *Mehedinți – Istorie și Cultură* [Mehedinți - History and Culture].

Zaberca, V. M., Leu, V., & Samoilă, M. (1999). *Addenda la biografia academicianului Petru Broșteanu, originar din Banatul sârbesc* [Addendum to the biography of academician Petru Broșteanu, a native of Serbian Banat]. *Analele Universității Eftimie Murgu* [Annals of the University "Eftimie Murgu"], *I*(6).

Kakucs, L. (2016). *Contribuții la istoria francmasoneriei din Banat* [Contributions to the history of Freemasonry in Banat]. *Analele Banatului. Arheologie-Istorie* [Annals of Banat. Archaeology-History], *XXIV*.

IV. On-line sources

Bota, I. (2011, September). *Oravița, a city of universal Freemasonry* [Oravița, un oraș al masoneriei universale]. Retrieved 12.08.2024 from <http://ionelbota.blogspot.com/2011/09/un-oras-al-masoneriei-universale.html>

Linguistics

FOSTERING EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE¹

Gabriel-Dan BĂRBULEȚ

1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania

e-mail: gabriel.barbulet@uab.ro

Abstract

The following paper examines effective language-teaching strategies for international students learning Romanian amidst increasing globalization. Addressing challenges faced by diverse learners, the study employs a methodology encompassing literature review, classroom observations, and interviews with experienced instructors. Emphasizing the importance of pragmatic elements in language instruction, the research explores the integration of technology, cultural immersion, and real-world applications to enhance pragmatic competence. Grounded in sociolinguistic theories, the article underscores the role of pragmatic competence in effective communication. Beyond linguistic structures, language instructors are urged to incorporate nuanced elements reflecting Romanian culture. Pedagogical strategies tailored to international students include task-based activities, role-playing, and language immersion. Assessment involves qualitative analysis of student performance, feedback, and proficiency assessments. The article also delves into the role of technology, discussing the integration of virtual reality, online platforms, and multimedia resources for immersive learning. The study concludes with implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers, advocating for culturally sensitive language curricula. Overall, it contributes to the discourse on language education by emphasizing the interconnectedness of language and culture, promoting pedagogical approaches that foster cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: pragmatics; teaching Romanian language; communication; international students; language education.

Introduction

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries has become an essential skill. Cross-cultural communication is not only a means of exchanging information but also a critical tool for fostering understanding, building relationships, and achieving mutual goals in diverse settings (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 12). The process of navigating these differences requires more than linguistic proficiency; it demands sensitivity to cultural norms, an awareness of pragmatic principles, and the ability to collaborate effectively. This article explores how cooperative learning can enhance cross-cultural communication, with particular attention to the application of Grice's Cooperative Principle in fostering pragmatic competence (Grice, 1975, p. 45).

¹ Article History: Received: 15.01.2025. Accepted: 12.02.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

1. Objective

The primary aim of this article is to highlight the intersection of cross-cultural communication, cooperative learning, and pragmatics. Cooperative learning—a pedagogical approach that emphasizes group work and mutual support—provides an ideal environment for participants from diverse cultural backgrounds to interact and learn from each other. Within this context, the Cooperative Principle, introduced by philosopher H. P. Grice, offers a valuable framework for understanding and improving communication strategies (Thomas, 1995, p. 117). By adhering to the maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner, individuals can navigate cultural differences more effectively and minimize misunderstandings.

Through this exploration, the article seeks to answer three fundamental questions:

How can cooperative learning enhance cross-cultural communication? Cooperative learning creates opportunities for individuals from different cultural backgrounds to engage in meaningful interactions. By working together on shared tasks, participants can develop mutual respect and understanding while refining their communication skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 67).

What is the role of the Cooperative Principle in improving communication strategies? The Cooperative Principle provides a pragmatic foundation for effective communication. By understanding and applying its maxims, individuals can align their conversational contributions with the expectations of their interlocutors, reducing ambiguity and fostering clarity (Levinson, 1983, p. 101).

Why is fostering cross-cultural communication critical in today's globalized world? In an era of globalization, where businesses, educational institutions, and communities are increasingly multicultural, the ability to communicate effectively across cultural divides is essential. Effective cross-cultural communication enhances collaboration, reduces conflict, and promotes inclusivity.

2. Structure Overview

To achieve these objectives, the article is organized into several sections, each addressing a critical aspect of the topic. The first section provides a comprehensive literature review, examining the theoretical underpinnings of cross-cultural communication, cooperative learning, and the Cooperative Principle. This is followed by an explanation of the research methodology, detailing the qualitative and mixed-method approaches used to analyze case studies.

The heart of the article lies in five detailed case studies that illustrate how cooperative learning environments can foster cross-cultural communication. These case studies span diverse contexts, including education, professional collaboration, and virtual teamwork, highlighting the practical application of theoretical insights.

Subsequently, the data analysis and interpretation section synthesizes the findings, offering insights into the effectiveness of cooperative learning and the Cooperative Principle in real-world settings. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications for educators, practitioners, and policymakers, along with recommendations for future research.

By integrating pragmatics with cooperative learning, this article underscores the transformative potential of these approaches in enhancing cross-cultural communication. Through a blend of theory and practice, it aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how individuals and groups can bridge cultural divides and work together more effectively in a globalized world.

3. Literature Review

Effective cross-cultural communication is an interdisciplinary field that incorporates principles of linguistics, education, and cultural studies. This literature review explores four key focus areas: Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims, the theoretical foundations of cooperative learning in education, challenges and strategies in cross-cultural communication, and the integration of pragmatics into communication practices. Drawing from peer-reviewed journals, educational studies, and intercultural communication research, this review provides a cohesive foundation for understanding the interplay of these domains.

4. Grice's Cooperative Principle and Its Maxims

Herbert Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle forms a cornerstone of pragmatic studies, offering a framework to analyze conversational dynamics. Grice posits that effective communication relies on a mutual understanding between interlocutors to cooperate in exchanging information (Grice, 1975, p. 45). The principle is operationalized through four maxims:

1. Quality: Contributions should be truthful and supported by evidence.
2. Quantity: Information should be as informative as required, without being excessive.
3. Relevance: Contributions must be pertinent to the conversation's context.
4. Manner: Communication should be clear, orderly, and free of ambiguity.

Research has shown that adherence to these maxims varies across cultural contexts. For instance, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) emphasize that cultures with high-context communication often prioritize implicit meaning, potentially deviating from the maxim of Quantity (p. 67). This underscores the need to adapt Grice's principles when analyzing cross-cultural communication.

5. Theoretical Foundations of Cooperative Learning in Education

Cooperative learning, defined as an instructional strategy where individuals work in small groups to achieve shared goals, has garnered substantial attention in educational research. Johnson and Johnson (2017) argue that cooperative learning promotes not only cognitive development but also social and emotional growth (p. 95). The underlying theories, such as Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, highlight the importance of interaction in learning processes.

Moreover, cooperative learning fosters skills essential for cross-cultural communication, including empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution. Studies indicate that group diversity enhances problem-solving and creativity, provided that learners receive adequate support to navigate cultural differences (Slavin, 2015, p. 67). These findings align with the principles of cross-cultural pragmatics, suggesting a symbiotic relationship between cooperative learning and effective communication.

6. Challenges and Strategies in Cross-Cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication is fraught with challenges arising from differences in language, values, and nonverbal cues. According to Hofstede (2001), variations in cultural dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism, significantly influence communication styles (p. 110). High-context cultures, for example, rely on implicit messages, which may be misunderstood by individuals from low-context cultures who prioritize explicit communication.

To address these challenges, researchers advocate for strategies such as cultural sensitivity training, active listening, and the use of neutral language (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 128). Furthermore, collaborative activities, such as cooperative learning tasks, provide a practical platform for participants to bridge cultural gaps through shared experiences. These

strategies not only mitigate misunderstandings but also align with Grice's maxims by enhancing the clarity, relevance, and mutual understanding in conversations.

7. Integration of Pragmatics in Communication Practices

Pragmatics, the study of language use in context, plays a crucial role in understanding how meaning is negotiated in cross-cultural interactions. Integrating pragmatics into communication practices involves teaching individuals to recognize and adapt to context-specific norms. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993, p. 89) highlight the importance of pragmatic awareness in reducing instances of pragmatic failure, which occurs when speakers' intentions are misinterpreted.

Educational interventions, such as role-playing and pragmatic instruction, have proven effective in equipping learners with the skills needed to navigate diverse communicative settings. For example, Ishihara and Cohen (2010, p. 102) demonstrate that explicit teaching of speech acts, such as requests and apologies, enhances learners' ability to communicate appropriately across cultures. These findings underscore the need to integrate pragmatics into cooperative learning environments to foster a deeper understanding of cultural nuances.

8. Synthesis and Implications

In synthesizing the reviewed literature, it becomes evident that Grice's Cooperative Principle, cooperative learning, and pragmatic integration are interdependent. Cooperative learning serves as a practical framework for applying the theoretical insights of pragmatics, while Grice's maxims provide a lens to evaluate communication efficacy. However, challenges in cross-cultural communication necessitate deliberate strategies to bridge gaps and promote inclusivity.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of cooperative learning on cross-cultural communication skills. Additionally, there is a need for more empirical studies exploring how cultural variations influence the application of Grice's maxims in diverse contexts. By addressing these gaps, scholars can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in fostering effective cross-cultural communication.

9. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is designed to explore the intersection of cooperative learning, cross-cultural communication, and Grice's Cooperative Principle. The approach integrates qualitative research with mixed methods for data triangulation, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of participants' experiences and the dynamics of their interactions. This section outlines the research design, participant selection, data collection techniques, and analytical tools employed to achieve the study's objectives.

9.1 Approach

A qualitative research design serves as the primary framework for this study, emphasizing the exploration of human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). To enhance the robustness of the findings, elements of mixed methods are incorporated. Mixed methods allow for data triangulation, combining qualitative insights with quantitative data to provide a holistic understanding of the research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 19). By integrating different data sources, the study seeks to capture the nuanced interplay between cooperative learning practices and cross-cultural communication strategies.

9.2 Participants

The study focuses on diverse groups of university students and professionals engaged in cooperative learning environments. The participants were selected from *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, an institution renowned for its multicultural student body and commitment to innovative educational practices. These participants include:

1. Undergraduate Students: Enrolled in interdisciplinary courses such as Business Communication, Linguistics, and International Relations, these students regularly engage in group projects that simulate real-world cross-cultural interactions.

2. Master's Students: Pursuing advanced degrees in areas such as Educational Leadership and Multilingual Studies, these participants bring a higher level of academic maturity and practical experience to cooperative learning settings.

3. Visiting International Students: Participating in exchange programs, these students represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, enriching the study with diverse perspectives.

4. Professional Participants: Faculty members and corporate trainers involved in designing and facilitating cooperative learning workshops contribute their insights on the practical implementation of these methodologies (Smith & MacGregor, 2009, p. 58).

9.3 Data Collection Techniques

To comprehensively capture the dynamics of cooperative learning and cross-cultural communication, the study employs three primary data collection techniques:

1. Observations During Cooperative Learning Sessions: Observations were conducted during classroom sessions and group activities at *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia. For instance, a project-based activity in a Business Communication class required mixed groups of Romanian and international students to develop marketing strategies for a local business. Detailed field notes documented instances of effective collaboration and pragmatic challenges, such as misunderstandings stemming from cultural differences (Angrosino, 2007, p. 43).

2. Surveys and Interviews: Structured surveys and semi-structured interviews were administered to both students and faculty. The surveys gathered quantitative data on participants' perceptions of cooperative learning and communication effectiveness, while the interviews provided qualitative insights into their experiences. For example, a master's student in Educational Leadership described how applying the maxim of Relevance helped resolve a group conflict during a case study discussion (Flick, 2018, p. 95).

3. Analysis of Communication Artifacts: Communication artifacts such as recorded group discussions, project reports, and peer evaluations were analyzed to identify patterns of interaction. In one instance, recordings from a multilingual group project highlighted how participants adhered to or deviated from Grice's maxims. For example, a student's over-detailed explanations (violating the maxim of Quantity) occasionally led to frustration among peers, underscoring the importance of concise communication (Grice, 1975, p. 45).

9.4 Tools

To analyze the collected data, a range of tools and techniques were employed:

1. Thematic Analysis Software: NVivo software was utilized to code and categorize qualitative data from interviews and field notes. Themes such as "cultural adaptation," "effective collaboration," and "pragmatic awareness" emerged from this analysis.

2. Transcription Tools: Otter.ai facilitated the accurate transcription of recorded group discussions and interviews. This ensured that critical details, such as tone and pauses, were preserved for analysis (Gibbs, 2007, p. 88).

3. Coding Framework for Pragmatic Maxims: A coding framework based on Grice's maxims was developed to evaluate communication patterns. For example, utterances were categorized as adhering to the maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, or Manner. Deviations were further analyzed to understand their impact on group dynamics and outcomes.

9.5 Illustrative Examples

An illustrative case involved a group of undergraduate students working on a cross-cultural marketing project. The team included two Romanian students, an exchange student from Spain, and a visiting student from Nigeria. During a brainstorming session, the Spanish student's reliance on high-context communication styles occasionally led to misinterpretations by the Romanian students, who favored more explicit expressions. By applying the maxim of Manner, the group gradually developed strategies to clarify their contributions, improving overall collaboration.

In another example, a professional workshop on cooperative learning, facilitated by faculty from the university, demonstrated how structured activities like role-playing can enhance pragmatic awareness. Participants practiced adhering to the maxim of Relevance by focusing their contributions on the task at hand, resulting in more efficient discussions and higher group satisfaction.

The research methodology employed in this study combines qualitative insights with quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cooperative learning fosters cross-cultural communication. By engaging diverse participants and employing robust data collection and analysis techniques, the study contributes valuable insights into the practical application of Grice's Cooperative Principle in educational and professional settings. The use of thematic analysis, transcription tools, and pragmatic coding frameworks ensures that the findings are both rigorous and contextually grounded.

9.6 Case-Studies

To illustrate the interplay between cooperative learning, cross-cultural communication, and Grice's Cooperative Principle, this section presents five detailed case studies derived from the methodology outlined earlier. Grounded in the findings of the literature review and supported by qualitative and mixed-method approaches, these case studies explore the practical application of the Cooperative Principle's maxims within diverse cooperative learning environments. By examining real-world examples from *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, these studies provide a concrete understanding of how pragmatic strategies and collaborative efforts foster effective communication across cultural boundaries.

Case Study 1: Undergraduate Business Communication Project

A group of undergraduate students at the 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, enrolled in a Business Communication course, worked on a project to develop a marketing strategy for a local Romanian winery. The team included three Romanian students, one visiting student from Germany, and another from Turkey. Challenges arose when the German student, accustomed to direct and structured communication, found the Turkish student's more narrative-driven approach to brainstorming disorganized. Applying Grice's maxim of Relevance, the group instituted a rule to align all ideas with the project's goals, which reduced conflicts and streamlined discussions. Observations and communication artifacts highlighted how the Romanian students bridged these styles, demonstrating the importance of adaptability in cooperative learning environments.

Case Study 2: Master's Educational Leadership Workshop

A cohort of Master's students in Educational Leadership participated in a workshop designed to simulate team-based problem-solving in a multicultural setting. Participants included two Romanian students, an international student from South Korea, and a student from Italy. The task required designing an inclusive curriculum for a hypothetical international school. Miscommunication occurred when the South Korean student's focus on collective decision-making clashed with the Italian student's preference for assertive individual contributions. Using Grice's maxim of Quantity, the group set time limits on individual input to ensure balanced participation. Surveys and interviews revealed that the structured approach not only improved collaboration but also fostered respect for diverse perspectives.

Case Study 3: Multilingual Group Project on Climate Action

A multilingual group of students, including participants from Romania, France, Nigeria, and China, collaborated on a sustainability initiative to address climate change. The task involved drafting a proposal for a green campus initiative. Initial discussions were marked by misunderstandings due to cultural differences in expressing agreement and disagreement. For instance, the French student's use of indirect feedback was misinterpreted as disinterest by the Nigerian student. Through adherence to the maxim of Manner, the group developed explicit protocols for feedback, such as summarizing key points and confirming mutual understanding. Recorded discussions revealed a significant reduction in miscommunication by the project's conclusion.

Case Study 4: Faculty-Led Cooperative Learning Workshop

Faculty members at *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia facilitated a cooperative learning workshop for corporate trainers and educators. The participants, representing eight different countries, were tasked with designing a cross-cultural onboarding program for international employees. Observations indicated that early interactions were dominated by participants from low-context communication cultures, such as the Netherlands, while those from high-context cultures, like Japan, contributed less frequently. To address this imbalance, the facilitators emphasized the maxim of Quality, encouraging participants to provide evidence-based suggestions. Thematic analysis of post-workshop evaluations highlighted improved inclusivity and increased confidence among high-context participants.

Case Study 5: Undergraduate Role-Playing Exercise in Linguistics

In a linguistics course, undergraduate students participated in a role-playing exercise simulating diplomatic negotiations. The group included three Romanian students, an international student from Spain, and another from India. The scenario required negotiating a trade agreement while adhering to culturally specific communication norms. Early sessions revealed that the Spanish student's animated communication style was perceived as overly assertive by the Indian student, who preferred a more reserved approach. By incorporating the maxim of Manner into their strategies, the students adjusted their communication to be clear and culturally sensitive. Peer evaluations and video recordings demonstrated that the role-playing exercise not only enhanced their pragmatic awareness but also improved their ability to adapt to diverse communication styles.

9.7 Analysis and Interpretation of Case Studies

The five case studies presented provide a robust foundation for examining the dynamic interplay between cooperative learning, cross-cultural communication, and Grice's Cooperative Principle. This analysis integrates quantitative data, qualitative insights, and

thematic observations to illuminate how cooperative learning environments enhance communication strategies, foster cultural sensitivity, and mitigate potential miscommunication challenges.

10. Outcomes of the Research

The overarching outcomes across the case studies are as follows:

1. **Enhanced Communication Skills:** Participants consistently reported significant improvement in their communication abilities, particularly in adapting to culturally diverse group dynamics. This is evidenced by the surveys conducted, where 87% of participants stated that their ability to navigate cross-cultural communication had improved after the cooperative learning experience.
2. **Pragmatic Competence:** Adherence to Grice's maxims: Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner, was observed across all cases. Pragmatic strategies, such as concise explanations (Quantity) and culturally sensitive phrasing (Manner), played a critical role in reducing conflicts and enhancing group cohesion.
3. **Increased Cultural Awareness:** Participants exhibited greater cultural awareness and sensitivity as they progressed through their projects. For instance, in the multilingual group project (Case Study 3), participants adapted feedback styles to ensure clarity, leading to a notable reduction in miscommunication.
4. **Balanced Participation:** Cooperative learning strategies, such as time-limited contributions and structured feedback, promoted inclusivity and equitable participation, especially among participants from high-context communication cultures (Case Study 4).

The data collected through surveys, interviews, and communication artifacts provided a detailed quantitative perspective:

1. **Participant Perceptions:**
 - **Improved Communication Skills:** 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their communication skills were enhanced through cooperative learning.
 - **Cultural Sensitivity:** 78% reported an increased awareness of cultural differences and how to address them effectively.
2. **Adherence to Grice's Maxims:**
 - **Quality:** 92% of recorded interactions adhered to the principle of providing accurate and reliable information.
 - **Quantity:** Excessive or insufficient contributions dropped from 21% in initial interactions to just 7% by the project's conclusion.
 - **Relevance:** Over 85% of contributions were task-focused, a significant improvement compared to baseline observations.
 - **Manner:** Clarity increased substantially, with 89% of contributions in final stages being comprehensible and well-structured.
3. **Reduction in Miscommunication:** Surveys revealed that participants experienced 40% fewer misunderstandings by the end of their cooperative learning projects compared to their initial sessions.
4. **Group Dynamics:** Peer evaluations showed a 35% improvement in perceived group cohesion and productivity between the start and end of the case study activities.

Each case study offered unique contributions to the overall findings:

1. **Case Study 1: Undergraduate Business Communication Project:** This project highlighted the importance of aligning brainstorming activities with clear objectives to mitigate cultural and communicative disparities. For instance, Romanian and Turkish students bridged their differing styles by adhering to the maxim of Relevance, resulting in more structured discussions. The thematic analysis revealed “task alignment” as a recurring success factor.

2. **Case Study 2: Master’s Educational Leadership Workshop:** The structured approach of limiting contributions effectively balanced input from culturally diverse participants. The application of the maxim of Quantity ensured that dominant voices did not overshadow quieter participants, fostering inclusivity and mutual respect. Feedback protocols were particularly effective in resolving conflicts.

3. **Case Study 3: Multilingual Group Project on Climate Action:** Cultural misunderstandings were significantly reduced when the group adopted explicit feedback mechanisms. By the project’s conclusion, participants exhibited improved clarity in their exchanges (Manner), which was corroborated by video recordings and peer assessments.

4. **Case Study 4: Faculty-Led Cooperative Learning Workshop:** This case underscored the value of evidence-based contributions (Quality) in leveling the playing field between participants from high- and low-context cultures. Participants reported increased confidence in presenting ideas, with thematic analysis emphasizing “confidence-building” as a key outcome.

5. **Case Study 5: Undergraduate Role-Playing Exercise in Linguistics:** Role-playing facilitated pragmatic awareness and adaptability among participants. The Spanish and Indian students adjusted their communication styles, leading to a more cohesive negotiation process. Peer evaluations highlighted a 30% improvement in perceived effectiveness of communication strategies over the course of the exercise.

The recurring themes across all case studies include:

1. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Participants demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt their communication styles to accommodate cultural differences, a skill essential for navigating cross-cultural interactions.

2. **Collaboration and Cohesion:** Structured cooperative learning activities consistently led to stronger group cohesion, with participants reporting higher levels of trust and collaboration.

3. **Pragmatic Awareness:** The explicit teaching and reinforcement of Grice’s maxims equipped participants with the tools needed to enhance clarity, relevance, and accuracy in their communications.

11. Commentary on Findings

The results of this study highlight the transformative potential of cooperative learning in bridging cultural divides. The integration of Grice’s Cooperative Principle provided a robust framework for analyzing and improving communication strategies. Key takeaways include:

1. **Relevance for Educational and Professional Settings:** The insights gained from these case studies have broad applicability, from academic environments to corporate training programs. Structured cooperative learning can serve as a model for cultivating essential communication skills across disciplines.

2. **Practical Applications of Grice’s Maxims:** The cases demonstrated how theoretical principles can be applied pragmatically to resolve real-world challenges. For

example, adherence to the maxim of Manner helped participants in multilingual groups establish clearer communication protocols.

3. Empirical Validation of Cooperative Learning: The statistical improvements observed in group cohesion, task focus, and participant confidence underscore the efficacy of cooperative learning as an educational strategy.

The case studies conducted at *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia provided valuable insights into the role of cooperative learning in promoting cultural sensitivity, pragmatic competence, and group cohesion. Across all five case studies, several recurring themes and patterns emerged:

1. Enhanced Communication Skills: Participants consistently reported improved communication abilities, particularly in adapting to culturally diverse contexts. Surveys indicated that 87% of participants felt more confident in navigating cross-cultural interactions, while 78% noted a heightened awareness of cultural nuances.

2. Adherence to Pragmatic Principles: The practical application of Grice's maxims—Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner—was evident in all group activities. Structured interventions, such as feedback protocols and time-limited contributions, facilitated clearer, more relevant, and culturally sensitive exchanges.

3. Cultural Adaptation and Flexibility: Participants demonstrated the ability to adapt their communication styles to bridge cultural differences. For example, high-context and low-context communication styles were reconciled through explicit strategies that aligned with the Cooperative Principle.

4. Improved Group Dynamics: Peer evaluations and observational data highlighted a significant improvement in group cohesion and productivity. By the end of the cooperative learning activities, group effectiveness had improved by 35% compared to initial sessions.

5. Reduction in Miscommunication: Misunderstandings due to cultural differences were significantly reduced, with participants experiencing 40% fewer communication challenges after implementing structured interventions.

12. Implications for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the interplay of cooperative learning, cross-cultural communication, and Grice's Cooperative Principle, it also opens promising avenues for future research that could further enrich this field.

Firstly, longitudinal studies represent a critical next step. Such research could examine the long-term impact of cooperative learning on cross-cultural communication skills. By exploring how participants retain and apply these competencies over time, longitudinal studies could offer deeper insights into the durability and practical application of these skills in diverse contexts.

Secondly, there is a need to broaden the scope to include diverse contexts. Expanding the research to encompass participants from a wider range of cultural, professional, and educational backgrounds would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the universality of these findings. This diversification would help identify context-specific variations and determine the extent to which cooperative learning and pragmatic principles are adaptable across different settings.

In addition, the study highlights the growing importance of technological integration in modern educational practices. With the increasing reliance on virtual learning platforms, future research could investigate how technology-mediated cooperative learning environments

influence cross-cultural communication. Specifically, it would be valuable to explore how digital tools and platforms impact the application of pragmatic principles, as well as the dynamics of interaction in multicultural virtual teams.

By addressing these avenues, future research could build on the current study's findings, contributing to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how cooperative learning and pragmatic principles intersect to enhance cross-cultural communication in an increasingly globalized and technologically advanced world.

Conclusion

Considering the findings, this study draws several interconnected conclusions that underline the synergy between theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

Firstly, the research validates the alignment between theoretical pragmatics and practical cooperative learning strategies. Specifically, Grice's Cooperative Principle provides a robust framework for analyzing and enhancing communication. Simultaneously, cooperative learning serves as an interactive platform for applying these principles in real-world contexts, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Secondly, the transformative role of cooperative learning emerges as a key insight. Beyond being merely an instructional method, cooperative learning proves to be a transformative approach that fosters cultural sensitivity, empathy, and collaboration. By engaging participants in shared tasks, this method creates opportunities for mutual learning and facilitates the development of essential communication skills, further strengthening interpersonal connections.

Moreover, the study emphasizes cross-cultural communication as a critical skill in today's globalized world. The findings highlight that navigating cultural differences is not just a natural ability but a skill that can be taught and cultivated. Intentional educational practices that emphasize adaptability, respect for diverse perspectives, and cultural understanding play a crucial role in this process.

In addition, pragmatic competence emerges as a cornerstone of effective communication. Adherence to Grice's maxims—clarity, relevance, accuracy, and sufficiency—proves central to overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. By focusing on these principles, participants in the study were able to achieve more cohesive and productive group interactions, demonstrating the practical value of pragmatic awareness.

Finally, the research points to broader implications for education and professional training. The findings suggest that cooperative learning and pragmatic principles extend far beyond academic settings. These strategies can be effectively applied in various fields, including corporate training, international diplomacy, and multicultural community building. As such, they offer universal tools for fostering effective communication in diverse and complex environments.

By synthesizing these conclusions, the study underscores the transformative potential of integrating theoretical pragmatics with cooperative learning to cultivate cross-cultural communication skills. This integration not only enhances educational practices but also equips individuals with tools to navigate and thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

References:

Angrosino, M. V. (2007). *Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research*. London: Sage Publications.

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Flick, U. (2018). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and Conversation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). *Culture and Interpersonal Communication*. London: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*. London: Sage Publications.
- Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. D. (2010). *Teaching and Learning Pragmatics: Where Language and Culture Meet*. London: Pearson Education.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2009). *Cooperation and Learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2017). *Cooperation and Learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2017). Cooperative learning: Improving university instruction by basing practice on validated theory. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 25(3-4), 85-118.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). *Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come*. Washington: Educational Researcher.
- Kasper, G., & Blum-Kulka, S. (1993). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Slavin, R. E. (2015). *Cooperative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Smith, B. L., & MacGregor, J. T. (2009). *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication, and Politeness Theory*. London: Continuum.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. London: Routledge.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating Across Cultures*. New York: Guilford Press.

Education

EXPLORING OUT-OF-CLASS CONTEXTS IN EFL LEARNING: ROMANIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES¹

Elena MEȘTEREAGĂ,
Nicolaus Olahus Technological High School, Orăștie, Romania

e-mail: elena.mestereaga@gmail.com

Daniel DEJICA,
Politehnica University Timisoara, Romania

e-mail: daniel.dejica@upt.ro

Abstract

This study explores the role of out-of-class contexts (OOCs) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning among Romanian high school students, emphasizing how informal environments complement formal instruction. Data from 125 students across four public schools reveals active engagement with English through media consumption, gaming, and social media, enhancing vocabulary, listening comprehension, and speaking confidence. Informal settings provide low-anxiety opportunities for meaningful communication and experimentation. Motivation plays a pivotal role, with students linking English proficiency to future opportunities. Personal learning ecologies, such as online reading and conversations with others, foster development within supportive spaces. The study advocates integrating OOCs into formal instruction to bridge theoretical and practical knowledge, creating a holistic learning environment aligned with learners' interests and real-world needs.

Keywords: Out-of-class contexts (OOCs); English as a Foreign Language (EFL); High school students; Informal language learning; Personal learning ecologies; Communicative language teaching (CLT).

Introduction

The Romanian education system has undergone significant reforms since the fall of Communism in 1989, transitioning from traditional teaching methods to more modern approaches influenced by Western educational practices. Among these changes is the widespread adoption of English as the primary foreign language taught in schools, replacing Russian and French. The shift toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles has emphasized interactive and learner-centered approaches over rote memorization and grammar drills (Toma & Dejica, 2023).

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in ensuring that all students achieve proficiency in English. While formal classroom instruction provides a foundation for language learning, it is increasingly recognized that out-of-class contexts (OOCs) play a vital role in

¹ Article History: Received: 11.03.2025. Accepted: 11.03.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

fostering linguistic competence. In this context, theoretical frameworks such as CLT principles and ecological perspectives on education highlight the importance of adapting teaching methods to local contexts and learners' needs. Studies have shown that informal language learning—through activities like watching movies or engaging in online communities—can significantly enhance language acquisition by providing authentic opportunities for practice. Research by Nunan (1989), Sundqvist (2009), and Cabot (2016) underscores the value of active participation in OOCs for developing linguistic skills. However, there is limited research on how Romanian EFL learners utilize these contexts. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the role of personal learning ecologies in supporting English proficiency among high school students. We explore how Romanian high school students use English outside the classroom and how these experiences contribute to their overall language development.

Our main research objectives include examining learners' perceptions of English use in daily life, identifying the social and contextual factors that influence EFL learning in OOCs, and exploring ways to integrate these insights into formal instruction. By focusing on high school students, we seek to provide practical recommendations for enhancing EFL education through a holistic approach that leverages both formal and informal learning environments. This article is part of a broader research initiative, as outlined in Meștereagă (2021). It builds upon the foundational concepts and findings presented in that work, delving into specific aspects to offer further analysis and insight.

1. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The significance of out-of-class contexts (OOCs) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning cannot be overstated (Benson, 2011; Richards, 2015, Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). These contexts, which encompass opportunities for practicing English outside formal classroom settings, provide learners with authentic exposure and practical applications of the language. Examples of OOCs include engaging with social media platforms, consuming entertainment media like movies and music, reading English materials, participating in language exchange programs, traveling, and using language learning apps. Complementing formal instruction, such activities create dynamic avenues for students to enhance their language acquisition.

Theoretical foundations such as the sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) and the input-interaction-output model (Long, 1996; Gass, 1997) emphasize the importance of social interaction in second language learning. Krashen's input hypothesis (Krashen 1985) underscores the necessity of exposure to comprehensible input, whereas his distinction between learning and acquisition highlights the subconscious nature of the latter, which occurs through meaningful exposure. Bialystok's focus on functional practice (Bialystok, 1994) also highlights the importance of exposure to the target language and meaningful practice. Together, these theories converge on the idea that rich, engaging input and social interaction are pivotal for language development.

A learner's social environment significantly shapes their attitudes, motivation, and opportunities for language use. Networks, personal English learning ecologies, and communities of practice all contribute to creating a supportive ecosystem for language learning. Central to this process is Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where social scaffolding enables learners to progress beyond their current abilities. This foundational work introduces the concept of ZPD, emphasizing the role of social interaction and guidance in learning. Thus, engaging with interpersonal spaces and speech communities becomes a crucial element in advancing learners' linguistic capabilities.

The social environment influences learners' social identity (Norton & Toohey, 2011) and motivation (Igoudin, 2013), as interactions within speech communities, personal networks,

and interpersonal spaces shape their self-concept as English speakers and drive their enthusiasm for engaging with the language. Learners construct and negotiate their social identities through language use (Norton, 1995), and these identities influence their confidence and self-concept as English speakers. Teachers play a crucial role in supporting this process by fostering positive attitudes and motivating learners. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are vital, with studies showing that learners who hold favorable attitudes toward English and its speakers, and who actively participate in OOCs, demonstrate greater progress in language skills (Dörnyei, 2001). Barker (2004) and Hyland (2004) further emphasizes the role of social factors in shaping learners' attitudes toward OOCs.

The social environment shapes learners' engagement with out-of-class contexts by influencing their access to resources, motivation to participate, and opportunities to interact with English in authentic, real-world settings. In this context, out-of-class contexts offer valuable opportunities for EFL learners to practice English in real-life situations. Benson (2001) categorizes out-of-class learning into naturalistic language learning, self-instruction, and self-directed naturalistic language learning. Understanding these contexts helps teachers support learners' language development by providing individualized packages of support.

The dual roles of input and output (Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1995) are central to language acquisition. Formal education typically focuses on providing structured input in grammar and form, whereas OOCs expand these opportunities through books, movies, online interactions, and music. Output, on the other hand, allows learners to practice language production—be it through conversations, writing, or interacting with English speakers. Swain (1985) identifies noticing, hypothesis testing, and negotiation of meaning as key functions of output in the learning process.

Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp offer extensive options for online communication, providing virtual speech communities for EFL learners. Researchers (Lomicka & Lord, 2009; Kitchakarn, 2016; Zhou, 2021) show that social media supports language learning, enhancing learners' engagement, interaction, and collaboration. Students should be encouraged to use social media tools to develop their EFL skills and confidence.

In summary, the integration of sociocultural perspectives and theoretical models highlights the importance of OOCs in EFL learning. By leveraging these contexts, educators can provide learners with holistic support that extends beyond the classroom, enabling them to develop their language skills and construct positive social identities as English speakers.

2. Methodology

Our primary focus was on understanding the social and contextual features that influence English learning. We formulated three main research questions, (1) What social and contextual conditions support English use for high school students?, (2) How do social networks and media influence their English language progress?, (3) In what ways can informal activities improve their skills?, aimed at exploring learners' environments, the relevance of social networks, and the role of informal activities in developing language skills.

We employed a mixed-methods approach (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) to gather data from 125 high school students across four public schools in Hunedoara County, Romania. We used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, diaries, and observations to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights into learners' experiences with OOCs. Participants were divided into two groups: one consisting of students from schools with average performance levels (Group 1 – students from schools A, B, and C) and another from a top-performing school (Group 2 – students from school D). Data was analyzed using statistical methods for quantitative responses and thematic coding for qualitative data.

The main reason for employing multiple instruments in data collection was to guarantee both validity and reliability. Ethnographic observations captured learners' interactions, settings, and behaviors, revealing the varied opportunities for English use beyond the classroom. These observations were supplemented by questionnaires, which provided biographical information and insights into learners' perceptions of OOCs. Semi-structured interviews with high school learners explored their backgrounds, motivations, and social networks, while seven-day diaries documented daily activities involving English use. Quantitative analysis, using descriptive statistics, complemented these findings by providing numerical insights into learners' behaviors and attitudes. This combination of methods allowed us to address both the breadth and depth of the phenomenon under study, ensuring a robust understanding of EFL learners' engagement with OOCs and offered a comprehensive image of how Romanian high school students engage with English in their personal environments.

The data collection procedures followed a structured timeline, ensuring systematic and efficient gathering of information. Observation and self-reflection were conducted over a two-year period, while questionnaires were distributed in phases across the participating schools. Interviews and diaries offered deeper qualitative insights, allowing learners to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words. This multi-instrument approach facilitated the triangulation of data, a critical step in enhancing the trustworthiness of findings.

Ensuring validity was a central aspect of the study. Internal validity was strengthened through pattern matching, logic models, and triangulation, while external validity was supported by the relevance of the research design. Triangulation incorporated multiple data sources, collection methods, and theoretical perspectives, offering a holistic evaluation of the phenomena. Theories such as the sociocultural model and the input-interaction-output model provided a framework for interpreting the findings.

Finally, ethical considerations were rigorously upheld throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the study's aims and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms and coding systems. These measures ensured the privacy of participants while fostering an open and trusting research environment.

3. Results

The findings of the study focus on the practices, perceptions, and experiences of Romanian high school EFL learners in Hunedoara County as they engage with English in out-of-class contexts (OOCs). We aimed to explore how these learners utilize personal learning ecologies to enhance their language skills and the sociocultural factors shaping their progress. Drawing on data collected through questionnaires, diaries, and interviews, the analysis delves into key areas such as learners' attitudes toward English, their engagement with OOCs, and the influence of their social networks. By examining these elements, we tried to understand how high school learners navigate and negotiate their identity as English users, contributing to the broader discussion of effective EFL learning strategies. We grouped school learners into two study categories: students from schools A, B, and C, and students from school D, acknowledged as the highest-performing institution in the region. This grouping allows for a comparative analysis of how learners' environments impact their English learning. Overall, the results underscore the significant role of OOCs in shaping English language proficiency among high school learners. The comparative analysis between the two study groups reveals how disparities in access, resources, and motivation impact learners' engagement with English. While passive exposure to English was common across all schools, active use in authentic contexts emerged as a key differentiator in achieving higher proficiency levels. These findings highlight the importance of creating supportive learning environments that encourage students

to integrate English into their daily lives, bridging the gap between formal instruction and informal learning opportunities.

3.1. EFL Learners' Backgrounds and Engagement with English

The two groups totaled 125 high-school students. The first group, consisting of 81 learners from schools A, B, and C, had a median age of 16.7 and primarily came from families where parents had completed high school and worked in physical jobs. In contrast, the second group, with 44 learners from School D (median age: 17.34), reflected more favorable conditions, with parents often holding university degrees and intellectual occupations. Learners in Group 2 also demonstrated a longer history of English study, with a minimum of 8 years compared to 4 years for some in Group 1. Despite these differences, learners in both groups rated their English proficiency as "good" or higher, with Group 2 showing slightly more confidence overall.

Both groups actively engaged with English in OOCs, with most learners using English daily through activities such as watching movies, listening to music, and engaging in informal conversations. Group 2 showed a marginally higher frequency of English use, with no students reporting a complete absence of out-of-class engagement. These findings highlight the significant role OOCs play in supporting language acquisition, helping learners apply their classroom knowledge in authentic, informal environments.

3.2. Motivations for Using English in Out-of-Class-Contexts

High school learners engage with English in out-of-class contexts (OOCs) for leisure, family interactions, and broader social purposes, with many intentionally using these opportunities to enhance their proficiency. Learners' attitudes toward English were assessed through the statement: "I consider learning English is important for my future". This sentiment saw unanimous agreement, with 71.6% of Group 1 (schools A, B, and C) and 75% of Group 2 (school D) strongly agreeing, highlighting a shared recognition of English as essential for future success. Such attitudes align with Spolsky's (1989) and Gardner's (1985) views on the motivational and practical roles of English, fostering intrinsic motivation and effective learning.

Career aspirations and professional goals were significant drivers for English use. Over 60% of learners in both groups expressed a desire for jobs in multinational companies, with a strong correlation ($r = 0.865$) between the groups. Interview insights revealed learners associating English with career success, such as Elison, who aspires to be a psychologist in England, and Jad, who sees English as crucial for journalism. Other learners emphasized how English enhances their education and personal satisfaction, with statements like: "English is going to be useful in my entire life, not just in my professional life."

Our data shows that high school learners recognize English as a cornerstone for their academic and professional futures. Their motivations are driven by both the practical advantages of English in the global job market and the personal satisfaction derived from mastering the language. Positive attitudes and intentional engagement with OOCs contribute to their readiness for future opportunities, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive environments that encourage learners to integrate English into their daily lives.

3.3. Learners' Perceptions: English in Formal vs. Informal Settings

High school learners overwhelmingly (97%) perceived differences between using English in the classroom and in out-of-class contexts (OOCs). In the classroom, learners in Group 1 (schools A, B, and C) highlighted a focus on formal speaking and pressure from grades and teacher evaluations. Similarly, Group 2 learners (school D) emphasized grammar-focused

tasks and formal communication styles. Fewer than 10% of learners in either group strongly agreed they enjoyed communicating in English during class, reflecting the constraints of the academic environment.

Conversely, learners expressed favorable perceptions of English use in OOCs. Group 1 participants reported finding OOCs easier, more enjoyable, and less stressful, appreciating the freedom to choose topics of personal interest and communicate informally. Group 2 learners echoed these sentiments, describing OOCs as confidence-boosting and natural. They emphasized mutual understanding over grammatical precision, particularly in conversations with native speakers (NSs) or non-native speakers (NNSs). Both groups valued the opportunities OOCs provided for fluency-building and integrating English into daily life.

Overall, OOCs were perceived as more effective and enjoyable for language use, fostering informal, practical engagement with English. This finding is supported by over 59% of learners in both groups agreeing or strongly agreeing with enjoying communication with foreigners or NSs in OOCs, emphasizing the importance of such contexts for building confidence and motivation.

3.4. Media and Interaction: Opportunities for EFL Use Beyond the Classroom

High school learners' responses to the questionnaire reveal a diverse range of favorite activities for using English in out-of-class contexts (OOCs). Among both groups, the most popular activity is listening to music (95.1% for Group 1; 97.7% for Group 2), followed closely by watching films or videos (92.6% and 95.5%, respectively). These results highlight the appeal of media consumption as a primary avenue for practicing English, offering learners a combination of entertainment and exposure to authentic language use.

Diary entries from learners provide additional insight into their preferences. For example, one student from Group 1 described music as a personal "therapy," connecting deeply with international artists like Christina Aguilera and expressing that music is tied to her emotions and moods. Another student, Lucy, shared how YouTube tutorials in English helped her learn piano, showcasing how learners engage with the language not only for leisure but also for skill development.

Learners' engagement with visual media reflects similar patterns. Movies, documentaries, and YouTube videos are frequently mentioned, with learners citing their role in improving vocabulary and comprehension. For instance, one diary entry from Group 2 detailed the enjoyment and learning derived from watching a documentary on dolphins, which expanded the student's knowledge of specific terminology. Another student described combining entertainment with practical language use by searching for a macaroni-and-cheese recipe and following instructional videos in English.

Reading materials presented a noticeable distinction between the two groups. In Group 2, 72.7% preferred reading online magazines, articles, or news, and 70.5% enjoyed reading novels, short stories, or academic books. Group 1 showed a lower preference for novels and academic books, with only 35.8% selecting this option. Both groups, however, reported limited engagement with printed media such as magazines and newspapers, with less than half choosing these as favorite activities. Learners often cited practical needs as motivators for reading in English. For example, one diary entry mentioned using English to access information unavailable in Romanian, such as tutorials and programming algorithms.

Interactive activities, such as speaking with native or non-native speakers, also played a significant role. Group 2 showed slightly higher engagement in speaking activities overall, whether face-to-face or online. Group 1 learners demonstrated a strong preference for informal written communication, such as writing emails, chats, or text messages (70.4%), while fewer learners in both groups engaged in more formal writing tasks like keeping a diary or blog.

The findings underscore how learners seamlessly integrate English into their daily lives. They explore diverse activities, from consuming media and searching for information to participating in games and collaborative discussions with peers. This varied engagement reflects how OOCs facilitate meaningful and practical English use, enabling learners to develop their language skills in personalized, enjoyable ways.

3.5. Skill Development Through OOCs: Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking

High school learners demonstrate how out-of-class contexts (OOCs) can meaningfully contribute to their development in English. However, the extent of learning varies depending on how intentionally and effectively learners engage with these opportunities. While learners' use of English in informal settings does not automatically equate to language acquisition, their personal English learning ecologies—characterized by diverse activities and exposure—play a significant role in developing their skills. The four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are explored individually to highlight their progress.

a. Reading: Learners engaged with a range of materials, from classic literature like *The Wind in the Willows* to online articles on programming and politics, chosen to match their proficiency levels. Nearly 60% of participants reported improved knowledge and reading speed, while 85% noted vocabulary enrichment. Diary entries demonstrated how reading served practical needs, such as finding information for homework, and helped learners achieve intellectual goals, like exploring historical or literary topics.

b. Listening: Music was the most popular activity, with learners citing improvements in pronunciation and vocabulary. Almost 85% agreed or strongly agreed that listening improved their skills, although responses were mixed on coping with fast speech (38.27% neutral). Learners combined enjoyment with valuable exposure to natural language use through songs and radio programs.

c. Writing: Informal activities, such as gaming chats and correspondence, helped learners improve grammar (66.65%) and reduce spelling errors (58.01%). While fewer felt these activities supported formal writing skills, they gained practical experience in written communication. Learners described letter writing as a fun way to learn, despite its outdated nature.

d. Speaking: Identified as the most challenging skill due to fear of mistakes and shyness, speaking improved through practice in informal, low-pressure settings. Around 55.54% agreed or strongly agreed that OOCs helped them overcome fear, while 49.38% noted better communication with native speakers. Diary entries showed learners engaging in real-life interactions, such as navigating public transport for a tourist, which boosted their confidence and fluency.

Across all four language skills, learners' engagement with OOCs contributed significantly to their linguistic development. Listening and speaking activities, in particular, provided authentic opportunities for real-time practice, while reading and writing allowed for deliberate and thoughtful skill-building. By integrating English into their daily lives, high school learners created meaningful personal learning ecologies that supported their progress and enhanced their confidence in using the language.

3.6. Using Films, Videos, and Media for Comprehensible Input in EFL Learning

Watching films and videos emerged as a valuable and engaging practice for high school EFL learners, offering exposure to authentic language use in real-life contexts. This medium

provides learners with examples of natural expressions, conversational flow, and contextual cues such as gestures and facial expressions, which aid comprehension and mimic real-life interactions. For some participants, films and television serve as their primary source of real-life input, especially in settings where English is not commonly spoken.

Films, with their visual support, allow learners to interpret language more effectively, bridging gaps in vocabulary and comprehension. Many learners choose to enhance their understanding by using subtitles. For example, one learner used English subtitles while watching *Riverdale* to improve her grasp of spelling, pronunciation, and the meanings of unfamiliar words. Similarly, Lucy reflected on how subtitles in *The Invisible Woman* helped her navigate the British accent, leading to a deeper understanding of both formal and informal English, and boosting her confidence in listening.

While many learners approach films as a relaxing activity, some intentionally transform these experiences into learning opportunities. For instance, one participant highlighted how watching documentaries and TV series expanded her vocabulary and exposed her to sophisticated expressions. The process of making connections between what they watch and what they learn underlines how films and videos serve as a source of comprehensible input, particularly when supported by previous classroom exposure.

In addition to entertainment, learners turn to English-language resources to solve real-world problems and accomplish tasks. One student relied on YouTube tutorials to repair violin strings, noting that no equivalent resources were available in Romanian. Another learner used English instructions to create a chart, emphasizing how proficiency in English enabled her to achieve her goal. These practical applications illustrate how OOCs foster meaningful engagement with the language, as learners tackle challenges while simultaneously building their linguistic capabilities.

By integrating English into their personal interests and practical needs, high school learners create dynamic learning ecologies. These practices not only provide comprehensible input but also encourage learners to engage with the language actively, developing their skills in a natural and enjoyable way.

3.7. Active Language Use: Exploring EFL Output Practices in Social Contexts

Romanian high school learners actively engage in producing English through various informal practices in their social contexts. These output activities, encompassing both written and oral forms, include interactions with native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs), online gaming, board games, casual conversations with friends and classmates, and even personal rituals like morning prayers. These practices create valuable opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge of English outside the classroom.

Diary entries provide glimpses into these interactions. One learner shared how they prayed in English, describing it as a spontaneous choice that deepened their engagement with the language. Another detailed speaking with a best friend in England, gaining the confidence to express themselves in English after overcoming initial fear. Online gaming also emerged as a significant activity, with one participant noting how they communicated exclusively in English while playing *Warcraft* and even made a new friend from Columbia during the game.

Social interactions further supported learners' output practices. Lucy wrote about conversing on Facebook with a foreign friend, while another learner invited classmates to play a board game in English, which combined learning with fun as they discovered new vocabulary together. These informal activities were complemented by thought-provoking conversations, such as discussing English idioms with a classmate on a bus ride.

Through these practices, learners engage in meaning-focused communication, aligning with Swain's (2000) concept of the output hypothesis. By exploring form and meaning while

receiving immediate feedback from their conversation partners, learners improve their fluency and automaticity in the language. Although these contexts are informal, they provide learners with opportunities to transfer theoretical knowledge from their EFL classes into practical, active use, bridging the gap between learning and real-life application.

Overall, the informal learning environments created by personal English learning ecologies allow high school learners to develop their communication skills in meaningful ways. Whether through conversations, games, or personal tasks, these practices enhance their fluency, confidence, and ability to use English dynamically in diverse situations.

3.8. Shaping Social Identity Through English Use

High school learners' identities as English users are shaped and reshaped through their daily interactions and experiences with the language. According to Kroskrity (2000), linguistic practices help individuals construct social identities that grant them membership in specific communities. For these learners, each successful encounter in English reinforces their identity and confidence, while setbacks can challenge their sense of belonging as English users. One learner (2218) reflected in her diary how a positive experience using English made her feel motivated to improve further, while another (2217) expressed that "*English has become a part of our lives, and I sometimes use it even if I don't realize.*" Similarly, 2116 noted a moment when he spontaneously started thinking in English, illustrating how deeply integrated the language had become in his cognitive processes.

These reflections reveal how personal successes and interactions contribute to the formation of social identity as English users. Learners expressed pride in their ability to communicate in English, with one noting that speaking with international friends allowed her to overcome linguistic barriers and connect with new cultures. The role of identity in fostering sustained interest in EFL learning is significant, as Barron (2006) suggests that a learner's identity is central to understanding their self-initiated and motivated learning efforts.

3.9. Interpersonal Spaces: Fostering Confidence Through English Use

Relationships play a pivotal role in shaping the success or discouragement of learners' English use, as noted in the theoretical framework. High school learners' informal social networks—comprising friends, family, and international contacts—serve as the foundation for their interpersonal spaces where English is actively used. These networks, while often loose and diverse, create opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, receive feedback, and further develop their skills.

Diary entries provide a glimpse into these interpersonal spaces. Some learners spoke about regular conversations with international friends, including a Macedonian friend or a cousin from South Africa, while others described interactions with family members who encouraged English use. For instance, one learner spoke about speaking English with her father, who had learned the language later in life and inspired her to practice. Another noted the role of her elder sister and her English-speaking friends in helping her adapt to the British accent and grow comfortable with speaking.

Online platforms also play a critical role in expanding learners' social networks. Learners described engaging in online conversations through games or social media, emphasizing how corrections and feedback from peers helped them refine their language. One respondent shared that her small group of English-speaking friends on Skype provided a supportive environment to improve her proficiency, while another one recounted how occasional interaction with native speakers enhanced her confidence.

These collaborative and interactive practices exemplify how learners build relationships through English, creating interpersonal spaces that support their identity as English users. As

Cummins (2000b) explains, such meaningful interactions are reinforced by situational cues and active negotiation of meaning, providing learners with valuable feedback and growth opportunities.

3.10. Some Remarks on the Role of OOCs in EFL Learning

Our findings highlight the vital role that OOCs play in fostering English proficiency among high school learners. Through diverse practices such as watching films, listening to music, reading, writing, and engaging in spoken communication, learners actively create personal learning ecologies that facilitate their linguistic and cognitive development. The data also emphasizes the significance of identity and social networks in shaping learners' motivation and confidence, reinforcing the importance of meaningful interactions for effective language use. While the learners' experiences vary depending on their backgrounds and contexts, the overall results demonstrate their agency in leveraging both informal and formal opportunities to enhance their English skills. Our findings underscore the potential of OOCs to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-life applications, empowering learners to become confident and autonomous English users.

Conclusion and Limitations of the Study

This study has explored the dynamic interplay between high school EFL learners and out-of-class contexts (OOCs), shedding light on how these informal settings contribute to English language acquisition. By examining learners' practices, perceptions, and social interactions, the research highlights the pivotal role that personal learning ecologies play in fostering language development. Through active engagement with English in diverse settings—whether watching films, listening to music, reading, writing, or speaking—learners not only reinforce their classroom learning but also develop the confidence and motivation to use English in real-life scenarios.

A key finding of this study is the critical influence of social identity and relationships on learners' progress. EFL learners construct their identities as English users through meaningful interactions, successfully navigating linguistic challenges and gaining the confidence to communicate effectively. Their interpersonal spaces, composed of friends, family, and international contacts, provide opportunities for authentic language use and feedback, which significantly enhance their proficiency and fluency.

Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of learner agency in the process of language acquisition. The active participation of learners in creating and utilizing OOCs demonstrates their commitment to improving their skills. By combining their personal interests with intentional learning strategies, they transform informal activities into meaningful language practices, showcasing the potential of self-initiated learning.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes the need to bridge formal instruction with informal learning opportunities, encouraging learners to integrate English into their daily lives. By doing so, they become not only proficient users of the language, but also autonomous and confident individuals prepared to navigate the globalized world. The findings presented here offer valuable insights into the practices and potential of high school EFL learners, providing a foundation for further exploration of effective language learning strategies in similar contexts.

While this study provides valuable insights into the engagement of Romanian high school EFL learners with out-of-class contexts (OOCs), certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research is geographically confined to four schools in Hunedoara County, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions or educational systems. Second, the study primarily relies on self-reported data from questionnaires, diaries,

and interviews, which, while rich in qualitative depth, may be influenced by participants' subjective perspectives or recall bias. Additionally, the study focuses exclusively on high school learners, excluding younger or older age groups whose experiences with OOCs may vary significantly. The absence of long-term follow-up further limits the ability to measure the sustained impact of OOCs on learners' language proficiency over time. Finally, cultural and contextual factors unique to Romania may not fully reflect the experiences of EFL learners in other countries, suggesting the need for further research across diverse populations to validate and expand the findings.

References:

- Barker, D. (2004). *The social context of language learning: A study of attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition*.
- Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. London: Routledge.
- Bialystok, E. (1994). Analysis and control in the development of second language proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16(2), 157–168.
- Cabot, H. (2016). 'Refugee Vvices': Tragedy, ghosts, and the anthropology of not knowing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(6), 645-672.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gass, S. M., (1997). *Input, interaction, and the second language learner*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and second language writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Igoudin, L. (2013). Social identity and language learning motivation: Exploring the connection and activating learning. *International perspectives on motivation* (pp. 192-214). London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://10.1057/9781137000873_11
- Kitchakarn, O. (2016). How students perceived social media as a learning tool in enhancing their language learning performance. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 15(4), 53-60.
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.
- Lomicka, L., & Lord, G. (2009). The next generation: Social networking and online collaboration in foreign language learning. *CALICO Journal*, 26(2), 371-397.
- Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413–468). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

- Meştereagă, E. (2021). *The role of out-of-class contexts in EFL learning*. Timişoara: Editura Universităţii de Vest.
- Norton, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(1), 9-31.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. *Language Teaching*, 44(4), 412-446.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sundqvist, P. (2009). *Extramural English matters: Out-of-School English and its impact on Swedish ninth graders' oral proficiency and vocabulary*. [Doctoral dissertation, Karlstad University].
- Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén, L. K. (2016). *Extramural English in teaching and learning: From theory and research to practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235–253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Toma, A. & D. Dejica. (2023). Mental translation and its contribution to communicative language teaching and learning. *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, 16 / 2023, 120-126. Timisoara: Editura Politehnica.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wisdom, J., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Mixed methods: Integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis while studying patient-centered medical home models. *PCMH Research Methods Series 13*, 1-5. Rockville: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.
- Zhou, Y. (2021). Impacts of social media on language learning: A review of literature. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2021)*.

Book reviews

HĂISAN D. (2022). *A STUDY OF RETRANSLATION AND OSCAR WILDE'S TALES IN ROMANIAN*. CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING, 275 p.¹

Emmanuel Blaise TAPON
Laval University, Québec, Canada

e-mail: emmanuel.tapon.1@ulaval.ca

Abstract

This review examines Daniela Hăisan's study of Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian translation (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022). Analyzing twelve translations from 1911 to 2020, the book combines diachronic and synchronic approaches to challenge the retranslation hypothesis and illuminate translation practices in peripheral cultures. Through a flexible, text-driven methodology, Hăisan develops a template for assessing children's literature translations while exploring the relationship between source texts and their multiple translations. This work provides a valuable methodological framework for understanding the dynamics of retranslation in peripheral cultural contexts.

Keywords: Romanian literature; retranslation; Oscar Wilde; reception; children's literature.

Contrary to what the coordinating conjunction “and” in the title might initially suggest, *A Study of Retranslation and Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian* is not a bifurcated analysis of two separate elements, but rather an interwoven exploration of retranslation theory illustrated through the rich tapestry of Oscar Wilde's enduring legacy in Romanian literature. By bridging what might appear as separate items, the unified narrative illuminates both the theoretical landscape of retranslation and the cultural evolution of Wilde's tales in Romania.

The relevance of this book, which builds on Wilde's nine children's tales, resonates with Isabelle Collombat's view, as echoed by the author, that the 21st century is the “age of retranslation” (p. 47). It explores the evolving nature of retranslations, which are no longer limited to diachronic and chronological approaches but are increasingly synchronic, reflecting the dynamic landscape of contemporary translation practices. Through this lens, the book offers insights into the complex interplay between literature, language, and culture in the modern era. The author begins by highlighting an intriguing phenomenon: in March 2021, nine different Romanian editions of Wilde's children's stories were simultaneously available in bookshops and libraries across Romania. This remarkable accessibility serves as a springboard for a deeper investigation into the factors that have contributed to Wilde's lasting impact on Romanian literature and culture.

At its core, *A Study of Retranslation* is a multifaceted work that touches on several aspects of translation studies. It examines the internal factors of text analysis and translation

¹ Article History: Received: 07.12.2024. Accepted: 13.01.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

strategies, while also considering external elements such as the roles of translators, publishers, and the broader socio-historical and institutional contexts that have shaped Wilde's reception in Romania. The motivation for carrying this study of retranslation is clearly articulated and substantiated as the author situates the work within the growing field of retranslation studies, citing numerous recent publications and academic initiatives that demonstrate the increasing scholarly interest in this area. By focusing on the retranslation of Wilde's tales in Romania, the book contributes to a broader understanding of retranslation phenomena while also shedding light on the unique cultural and linguistic context of Romanian translation.

The theoretical framework is both comprehensive and nuanced, reflecting the complexity of the subject matter. By adopting a flexible and eclectic approach to (re)translation, the study draws from a diverse range of translation theories. This approach allows for a more holistic study of the translation of Wilde's tales in Romanian, incorporating insights from narrative theory, narratology, linguistics, onomastics, and sociology.

Hăisan navigates the tension between traditional descriptive and historical approaches to translation studies and more contemporary perspectives. While acknowledging critiques of these methods by scholars like Jean-René Ladmiral, who advocates for a more forward-looking "productive traductology" (p. 244), the book makes a compelling case for the continued relevance of descriptive and historical analyses, particularly in the context of retranslation studies and when examining translations from a "major linguaculture" into a "minor" one as is the case when translating Wilde's tales from English to Romanian (p. 5).

This approach is particularly valuable given the unique position of translation within Romania's literary polysystem. As the author notes, drawing on Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, in "minor" cultures, translation often occupies "a primary position within the literary polysystem" (p. 5). This phenomenon, further explored by Venuti (2005) in his work on translation asymmetries, or Casanova (2002) in her concept of literary capital accumulation through translation, underscores the importance of historical and descriptive analyses for understanding the evolution and impact of translated works in contexts like Romania. Such analyses are crucial for illuminating the complex interplay between translated literature and the development of national literary traditions in less dominant cultural spheres.

The book's theoretical framework is further enriched by its consideration of key elements in translational reflection, as outlined by Lance Hewson. By examining factors such as the triggers for translation, the translational framework, the role of the translator, and the nature of the target text, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the translation process and its outcomes.

Moreover, the author demonstrates a keen awareness of the specific challenges inherent in translating children's literature. By addressing issues such as cultural context adaptation, ideological manipulation, dual readership, and features of orality, the book offers valuable insights into the unique considerations that come into play when translating Wilde's tales for a Romanian audience. Perhaps most intriguingly, the study explores the concept of "hospitality" in translation, drawing on the works of Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000) and Ricoeur (2006) whose perspectives align closely with Berman's principles of ethical translation, particularly his emphasis on respecting and preserving the foreign elements of the source text. This philosophical approach to translation allows for a deeper examination of how the Romanian language and culture have embraced and adapted Wilde's tales over time.

One of the book's strengths lies in its methodological approach. The author employs both diachronic and synchronic perspectives, offering readers a comprehensive view of how Wilde's tales have been translated and retranslated over time. This dual approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the evolution of translation practices and the changing perception of Wilde's work in Romanian culture.

The study makes a useful contribution to translation criticism by proposing a template based on universal parameters for assessing children's literature translations, with a particular focus on the unique challenges. Though she comes up with a structured yet flexible approach to evaluating translation quality and effectiveness, Hăisan admits that no single theoretical framework can fully encapsulate the complexities of literary translation – a perspective aligned with Cay Dollerup's observation on the partial nature of existing Translation Studies theories. By providing clear rationales for her analytical choices, the author guides readers through her decision-making process, offering a nuanced understanding of both general translation techniques and the specific challenges posed by Wilde's distinctive authorial voice. This approach not only allows for a robust examination of stylistic translation methods but also demonstrates adaptability to the unique demands of the source material.

The book is structured into three main parts, each addressing different aspects of the (re)translation of Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian. This approach allows for a thorough examination of the subject matter, from broad context to specific analyses. Included between the main parts are two interludes, which serve to bridge the sections and explain the structure of the following part, thereby guiding the reader through the complex material.

To begin with, Part One, which comprises four chapters, sets the stage by providing a global view of Wilde's tales in Romanian. Particularly noteworthy is the author's careful consideration of various factors influencing translation, including the targeted audience, format, translator type, and translational act type. This multifaceted approach demonstrates the complexity of the translation process and the myriad factors that can influence a text's reception in a new cultural context.

The author contextualises Oscar Wilde's reception in Romania within the broader European landscape and explores the nuances of his tales' translations. She examines Wilde's impact on Romanian culture, notably highlighting *The Happy Prince* as his most frequently translated work and delves into the specifics of the stories. Hăisan goes on to showcase the specifics of Wilde's tales, exploring the genesis, reception, themes, and stylistic features of the stories. These provide crucial background information for understanding the challenges the tales present to translators. She further investigates key dichotomies in translation practices – primarily translation vs retranslation – and explains the selection criteria for the primary corpus of study, which consists of thirteen representative translations spanning from 1911 to 2021. While the corpus is not truly exhaustive as she acknowledges, the study provides a foundation for comparative analysis.

The interlude between Parts One and Two introduces the author's analytical framework, which is based on three major parameters: the translator, the edition, and the target text. This framework provides a structured approach to analysing each translation while acknowledging the historical context in which it was produced. The author's attention to the historicity of retranslation is particularly commendable, as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of how translation norms and practices have evolved over time.

Part Two forms the core of the book. Made up of 12 thematically organised chapters, it offers a diachronic analysis of twelve target texts spanning over a century. Each translation is scrutinised, with the author highlighting distinctive features such as translation strategies, stylistic choices, and target audience considerations. This chronological approach allows readers to trace the evolution of Wilde's reception in Romania and observe how different translators have approached the challenges posed by Wilde's unique style.

Part Three offers a cross-cutting view of the translations, focusing on specific textual elements across multiple versions. The examination of noun phrases as translation units provides valuable insights into the challenges of translating Wilde's distinctive style. The

discussion of “retranslation rivalry” in cases of synchronic retranslations adds another layer to our understanding of the dynamics of literary translation.

The inclusion of appendices, particularly the diagram of translation metaphors used to capture the essence of the analysed target texts, provides a useful visual summary of the author’s findings.

In analysing twelve Romanian translations of Wilde’s tales, the author employs creative metaphors and cultural transmission concepts to effectively summarize complex translation phenomena. While concise labels cannot provide exhaustive verdicts, they serve as practical reference points in charting the history of (re)translation. The study observes a shift from early translations characterized by hospitality and incrementality to later versions reflecting impersonality. Notably, the research challenges the retranslation hypothesis, finding no clear progression from target-orientedness to source-orientedness across the corpus. For instance, as the author argues, Dimitrie Anghel’s 1911 text, the first Romanian version of a Wildean tale, paradoxically demonstrates strong source-orientedness. Similarly, the study refutes the notion of a linear quality improvement culminating in a definitive canonical translation or Berman’s “grande traduction”. Instead, it suggests a cyclical pattern, with each historical period producing its own exemplary translation. This nuanced approach highlights the complexity of retranslation processes and the limitations of applying general hypotheses to specific literary contexts.

A key strength of the book lies in its recognition that the source text itself largely dictates the model of translation criticism. By allowing the specific difficulties and stylistic features of Wilde’s tales to guide the selection of analytical tools, the author ensures that the critique remains grounded in the text’s particularities. This approach is further enhanced by a comparative analysis of target texts and a consideration of what she refers to as “translators’ habitus and idiosyncrasies” (p. 6), providing a comprehensive view of the translation process.

Another intriguing aspect of the study is its exploration of Romania’s “cult of translation” (p. 7). The author effectively argues for the significance of examining translations into Romanian, highlighting the country’s high “translation rate” and the important role that translation has played in shaping national language and literature, thereby suggesting that “peripheral” cultures have their say as well. This focus on a “minor” language and culture provides insights into the dynamics of translation in peripheral contexts, challenging the dominant Anglo-American perspective in translation studies.

Particularly noteworthy is the examination of Wilde’s children’s tales from a unified, coherent translational perspective, addressing a significant gap in the literature. By bringing together intratextual and extratextual factors and tracing the profile of Romanian children’s book translators, the study offers a comprehensive view of the translation process that has been largely absent from previous scholarship on Wilde’s work. This approach, focusing on the translation history of Wilde’s tales, not only contributes to our understanding of their reception in Romania, but also aligns with broader European trends in translation history research. The historical perspective provides valuable insights into the evolution of translation practices and cultural attitudes towards Wilde’s work over time, enriching both Wilde studies and translation history.

The author points out several significant challenges faced in conducting this study, demonstrating her level of academic rigour and self-reflection. One of the primary challenges lies in the vast corpus of texts under examination, which encompasses multiple aspects of translation studies, including historical and contemporary translations, retranslation theory, reception studies, and the specific challenges of translating children’s literature. However, the author’s ability to navigate this complexity while maintaining a balanced perspective is a testament to the depth and breadth of the research.

Another challenge arises from the dual nature of Wilde's tales themselves which, as she indicates, were originally written for both children and adults who have retained a sense of wonder. The stories present a unique case study in translation, in as much as each generation of readers brings new interpretations and cultural contexts to the texts. This temporal dimension highlights how changing societal norms, literary trends, and cultural expectations influence both the need for new translations and their reception. Hăisan extends this duality to the study itself, aiming to appeal to both Romanian and English-speaking readers, as well as to both scholars and general audiences interested in Wilde, Irish studies, or translation. This inclusive approach enhances the book's potential impact and readership.

The study also grapples with the practical difficulties of researching retranslations, particularly in the Romanian context. The author highlights the limitations of bibliographical databases, online catalogues, and national bibliographies, as well as the often incomplete paratextual information in older editions. Despite these obstacles, the book strives to provide a comprehensive view of Wilde's tales in Romanian translation, challenging readers to reconsider established notions about retranslation, especially in the context of children's literature and "minor" languages.

In a nutshell, while this study makes a significant contribution to translation studies through a thorough analysis of Wilde's tales in Romanian, its scope could be enriched by comparative perspectives from other Eastern European translations. The methodology developed, though robust for the Romanian corpus, provides a valuable framework that could be adapted to explore translation patterns in other "peripheral" cultures. This geographical focus, rather than a limitation, opens up promising avenues for future comparative research in translation studies, potentially revealing broader patterns in the translation of children's literature across different cultural and linguistic settings. The study thus serves as both a comprehensive analysis of its specific context and a methodological springboard for wider cross-cultural investigations.

References :

- Casanova, P. (2002). Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire: La traduction comme échange inégal [Consecration and accumulation of literary capital: Translation as unequal exchange]. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* [Proceedings of research in social sciences], 144(2), 7–20.
- Derrida, J., & Dufourmantelle, A. (2000). *Of hospitality* (R. Bowlby, Trans.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hăisan, D. (2022). *A study of retranslation and Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Ricoeur, P. (2006). *On translation* (E. Brennan, Trans.). London: Routledge. (Original work published 2004 in French)

**ROMANIAN WOMEN WRITERS' VOICES IN EXILE: INSIGHTS
FROM *UN DICȚIONAR AL EXILULUI FEMININ ROMÂNESC.
AUTOARE EMBLEMATICE, VOLUME REPREZENTATIVE* [A
DICTIONARY OF ROMANIAN WOMEN WRITERS' LITERARY
EXILE: EMBLEMATIC AUTHORS, REPRESENTATIVE WORKS]
COORDINATED BY EMANUELA ILIE¹**

Diana Alexandra AVRAM (ȘANDRU)

1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania

e-mail: diana-alexandra.avram@uab.ro

Abstract

*Coordinated by Emanuela Ilie (Associate Professor, PhD, at the Faculty of Letters, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, literary critic, and member of the Writers' Union of Romania), *Un "Dicționar al Exilului Feminin Românesc: Autoare Emblematice, Volume Reprezentative"* [A dictionary of Romanian women writers' literary exile: Emblematic authors, representative works] was published by Eikon Publishing House (Bucharest, 2024, 567 pages). The volume offers a comprehensive and focused perspective on Romanian women writers in exile, a subject often marginalised in traditional literary scholarship. While reference works such as Florin Manolescu's "The Encyclopaedia of Romanian Literary Exile" have significantly shaped the field, this dictionary stands out for its distinct emphasis on female authorship, positioning itself as a valuable and necessary complement to existing specialist literature. Designed as an indispensable bibliographic resource, the volume comprises twenty-three studies in literary history and criticism, each presented as a monographic analysis. These entries not only reconstruct the biographies of the selected authors but also offer in-depth examinations of their literary output, with a strong focus on the impact of exile on their creative trajectories. Each entry concludes with a comprehensive list of bibliographical references, reinforcing the scholarly utility of the volume.*

Keywords: exile; women writers of the Romanian exile; female authorship.

A bibliographic resource of undeniable relevance, *Un Dicționar al Exilului Feminin Românesc: Autoare Emblematice, Volume Reprezentative* [A dictionary of Romanian women writers' literary exile: Emblematic Authors, Representative Works] was recently published by Eikon Publishing House (Bucharest, 2024, 567 pages). Coordinated by Emanuela Ilie (Associate Professor, PhD, at the Faculty of Letters, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, literary critic, and member of the Romanian Writers' Union), the dictionary offers a cohesive and necessary perspective on cases of representative women writers from the Romanian exile. Although reference works such as Florin Manolescu's *The Encyclopaedia of Romanian Literary Exile* have already mapped the field, this volume distinguishes itself through its

¹ Article History: Received: 07.01.2025. Accepted: 01.04.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

exclusive focus on female authorship, positioning itself as a valuable complement to the existing specialised literature.

In the Foreword, Emanuela Ilie notes that the purpose of the dictionary is not to impose a rigid classification or definitive taxonomy of Romanian exile literature. Rather, it is conceived as a dynamic scholarly tool—one that showcases the thematic, stylistic, and generational diversity of Romanian women's writing in exile, from the late nineteenth century until the fall of the communist regime. Moreover, she highlights the absence of any prior synthesis devoted exclusively to female exiled writers. As such, the dictionary seeks to address that gap by offering a *reparatory gesture*: repositioning these authors within Romanian literary scholarship and acknowledging their significant cultural contributions.

The twenty-three women writers featured in the volume come from different generations and experienced diverse forms of exile. Their adopted cultural spaces reflect a wide geographical range: France, especially Paris (Elena Văcărescu, Anna de Noailles, Martha Bibescu, Sorana Gurian, Mariana Șora – temporarily, Sanda Stolojan, Monica Lovinescu, Aurora Cornu, Sanda Nițescu), as well as other European countries, including Sweden (Gabriela Melinescu), Germany (Mariana Șora, Herta Müller), Switzerland (Aglaja Veteranyi), and the United Kingdom (Adriana Georgescu). Beyond Europe, the dictionary documents writers who emigrated to Argentina (Alina Diaconu), Canada (Florica Bațu-Ichim), and, most prominently, the United States (Princess Ileana of Romania, Annie Samuelli, Eugenia Adams-Mureșanu, Vera Călin, Nina Cassian, Sanda Golopenția, Alex. Amalia Călin, Domnica Rădulescu). A recurring genre among these authors is memoir, often used to articulate personal and collective trauma. These traumas include illness (Sorana Gurian, Florica Bațu-Ichim), imprisonment (Annie Samuelli, Adriana Georgescu), and particularly political persecution and exile (Monica Lovinescu, Sanda Stolojan, Herta Müller).

Structured as monographic studies, the dictionary entries—many of which are impressively extensive, reaching up to one hundred pages—offer engaging biographical reconstructions and in-depth critical analyses, all supported by substantial bibliographic reference lists.

Although contributors were free to design the structure of their studies, all share a commitment to *close reading*. Some focus more heavily on contextual documentation of exile, while others offer detailed textual interpretations. While the volume does not adopt a single theoretical framework, many entries are implicitly informed by feminist criticism, memory studies, trauma theory, and exile studies. These combined approaches reveal how female exile writing is marked by tensions between displacement and continuity, loss and memory, and the struggle to redefine selfhood across cultures.

In addition, the volume's coordinator emphasises that the dictionary is not intended as an exhaustive list of emblematic female authors of the Romanian exile. Rather, it represents an initial stage in a broader process of research and recovery of forgotten or marginalised voices. Alongside documenting writers whose works are already recognised or partially canonised, Ilie highlights the dictionary's openness to future expansion—mentioning figures such as Roxana Eminescu, Oana Orlea, Monica Săvulescu-Voudouri, and Mira Simian-Baciu as candidates for further critical investigation. The contributors, based in academic centres in Romania and abroad (Iași, Bucharest, Craiova, Alba Iulia, Bratislava), reflect the collaborative and transnational nature of this undertaking.

Un Dicționar al Exilului Feminin Românesc thus stands not only as a bibliographic project, but as a forward-looking scholarly platform, calling for continued research, broader inclusion, and the sustained reappraisal of Romanian women's literary contributions in exile.

This critical framework takes shape through the individual case studies that follow, each contributing a distinct perspective on exile, identity, and literary memory. Among them, we begin by turning to the essays by Smărăndița-Elena Costin.

Smărăndița-Elena Costin penned three interrelated articles—on the triad Martha Bibescu, Anna de Noailles, and Elena Văcărescu—written in a clear thematic and analytical symbiosis. These studies focus on a *pre-exile* period, which chronologically precedes the post-World War II political exile, highlighting a distinct stage in Romanian cultural displacement.

Princess Martha Bibescu emerges as a key cultural figure during her French exile, an experience described as painful due to the circumstances in which it was imposed, though not before taking all necessary measures to have the palace of her soul added to the list of historical monuments² (Costin in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 39). In contrast to the burden of exile, Bibescu's literary merit was acknowledged by the French Academy, affirming her prestige in the host culture.

Costin anchors her analysis in the argument that:

Martha Bibescu's vast oeuvre, unfolding across numerous and intricately layered literary registers, reflects, on the one hand, her encyclopaedic culture and her desire to grasp and master the entire ontological scenario as expressed through various literary forms; on the other hand, it crystallises her inherent predisposition towards the monumental. Seen through the authentic filigree of her existence, the world captured by the author is transformed into an exemplary link in the universal food chain. Her gift for portraying the essential traits of the people of her time—regardless of status, class, or socio-economic scale—can be analysed in any of her writings.³ (Costin in Ilie et al., 2024, pp. 41–42)

Well-acquainted with French milieu, as shown in her biographical reconstruction, Bibescu transforms her exile into a tool for capturing symbolic capital. [...] a homecoming⁴ (Costin in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 51).

The case of Countess Anna Brâncoveanu de Noailles—an acclaimed poet, novelist, and author of (auto)biographical prose—is examined with equal depth and sensitivity. Noailles, who flourished within the same French literary milieu, is contextualised within the aesthetic and social codes of her time, as the refined behavioural code, inclined toward aestheticism and forms of interstitial sociability, is an emanation of the spirit of the *fin de siècle*⁵ (Costin in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 402). Smărăndița-Elena Costin offers nuanced insights into Noailles' participation in literary salons and her network of influential friendships.

The article devoted to Elena Văcărescu, described as “one of the most important women in Romanian culture”—not only for her literary contributions, but also for her diplomatic role and close ties to the royal family, particularly as one of Queen Elisabeth's confidantes—offers a multidimensional portrayal of her exile, shaped by literary, personal, and political factors. Elena Văcărescu, a “veritable cultural agent,” produced an extensive and genre-defying body of work: poetry, novels, plays, (auto)biography (memoirs, recollections, correspondence), and oratorical texts, including lectures delivered in the highest forums of the institutions of her

² All translations of quotations from Romanian to English are by the author: „dureros prin împrejurările în care este impus, însă nu înainte de a lua toate măsurile necesare pentru ca palatul sufletului său să fie trecut pe lista monumentelor istorice”

³ Original text: „Opera vastă a Marthei Bibescu, întinsă pe multe și întortocheate registre literare, reflectă, pe de o parte, cultura enciclopedică, dorința de a acapara și cunoaște întreg scenariul ontologic, cuprins în varii formule literare, iar, pe de altă parte, cristalizează predispoziția spre monumental a scriitoarei. Observată în filigranul autentic al existenței sale, lumea surprinsă de autoare este convertită într-o verigă exemplară a lanțului trofic universal. Darul său de a portretiza esențiala oamenilor epocii căreia îi aparține, indiferent de statut, clasă sau anvergură socio-economică, poate fi analizat în oricare dintre scrierile sale.”

⁴ Original text: „într-un instrument de acaparare a capitalului simbolic. [...] o *reîntoarcere acasă*”

⁵ Original text: deoarece codul comportamental rafinat, înclinat spre estetism și formele de sociabilitate interstițială, este o emanație a spiritului sfârșitului de veac”

time⁶ (Costin in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 513). Moreover, through detailed textual analysis, Costin demonstrates that, for Văcărescu, “exile represented a locus of assimilation of one culture and remembrance of another”⁷ (Costin in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 531).

Maria-Corina Dimitriu continues the exploration of this early stage of exile in her article dedicated to Princess Ileana of Romania (also known as Mother Alexandra), whose life story has increasingly attracted critical attention, particularly in her lesser-known role as a writer. Her memoirs are presented as texts of genuine documentary value. The article argues that the identity stakes in Princess Ileana’s volumes are thus doubled by significant political and social stakes⁸ (Dimitriu in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 169).

Born at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, these four women writers experienced major historical transformations, from the pre-war and interwar years through the post-war and even post-communist periods (in the case of Princess Ileana), alongside repeated political regime changes. Their status as witnesses to history is reflected both in their memoirs and in their cultural, diplomatic, and social engagements.

A subsequent generational group includes women writers born before, during, or shortly after the First World War—Annie Samuelli, Eugenia Adams-Mureșanu, Sorana Gurian, Mariana Șora, Sanda Stolojan, Adriana Georgescu, Vera Călin, Monica Lovinescu, and Nina Cassian—who were shaped by the vibrant cultural and ideological landscape of the interwar period. Their personal and professional paths are notably diverse, yet all were marked by the collapse of interwar ideals, the trauma of the Second World War, the imposition of the communist regime, and, for many, the transitional years and significant portions of the post-communist era. Most lived long enough to witness aspects of the 2000s, with the exception of Sorana Gurian, whose untimely death due to cancer brought a tragic and early end to her trajectory.

Ciprian Handru authors the dictionary entries on Adriana Georgescu and Annie Samuelli, two writers connected by the shared experience of imprisonment under the early communist regime.

In Adriana Georgescu’s case, Handru outlines a dramatic personal trajectory shaped by political persecution. Beginning as a film critic, later becoming a political reporter at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and ultimately serving as chief of staff to General Rădescu, Georgescu’s unwavering anti-communist stance led to her arrest. Her memoir, *La Început a fost Sfârșitul: Dictatura Roșie la București* [In the beginning was the end], translated by Dan Golopenția, takes the form of a noir-inflected narrative, with the author herself at its centre. The text vividly portrays the brutality of communist imprisonment, marked by relentless interrogations, dehumanising procedures, and the chilling conditions of the so-called “hospitals of horror.” Handru emphasises the stark and unfiltered quality of Georgescu’s narrative, which frequently employs the present tense, a stylistic choice that conveys the immediacy of lived trauma. This narrative strategy reflects a persistent existential rupture, in which the past is not simply remembered but continuously relived. Georgescu’s memoir is thus permeated by affective memory, transforming her personal ordeal into an enduring and immersive account of systemic violence. (Handru in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 117)

In contrast, Annie Samuelli adopts a more distanced approach in her memoir *Woman Behind Bars in Romania* (later translated into Romanian as *Gratiile Despărțiitoare* by Adina Arsenescu). Although grounded in personal experience, she deliberately avoids presenting the text as autobiographical, instead framing it as a universal and human narrative. According to

⁶ Original text: „poezii, romane, piese de teatru, (auto)biografia (memorii, evocări, corespondență) și textele oratorice, prelegerile susținute în forurile cele mai înalte ale instituțiilor vremii”

⁷ Original text: „exilul a reprezentat un locus al asimilării unei culturi și al rememorării unei alteia”

⁸ Original text: „Miza identitară a volumelor Principesei Ileana este dublată, astfel, de o miză politică și socială importantă”

Handru, she transcends the boundaries of an individual narrative, assuming the collective voice of all the women who were her fellow inmates⁹ (Handru in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 443). Her writing style, blending recollection with deliberate forgetting, reflects an identity rooted in solidarity rather than self-representation. In this context, Samuelli explores themes of otherness and shared historical experience through a narrative voice that is both empathetic and novelistic. As Handru notes, “one might say it is an exit from oneself to give voice to communal figures. Annie Samuelli writes compellingly about otherness, about the other, about general history, in a novelistic, empathetic, and natural style.”¹⁰ (Handru in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 443).

Alexandra Ruscanu focuses on two authors who settled in the United States: Eugenia Adams-Mureșanu, who also endured two brief periods of political imprisonment, and Nina Cassian. Although often remembered as the muse of Lucian Blaga, Eugenia Adams-Mureșanu is redefined here as the Poet of prisons and psalms,¹¹ according to Mircea Popa’s evocative phrasing. Her writing is distinguished by a style deeply infused with emotion, through which she constructs a lyrical space reflecting the fragility of the human spirit, one that seeks redemption primarily through faith and sensitivity (Ruscanu in Ilie et al., 2024, pp. 22–23).

Nina Cassian, by contrast, is marked by a life of bold contrasts, including her involvement with the illegalist UTC during adolescence, her shifting ideological positions, and a poetic path that spans from avant-garde experimentation to proletcult conformity. In exile, she composes the monumental journal *Memoria ca Zestre* (Memory as legacy—our translation, as the three autobiographical volumes remain untranslated), alongside poetry written in both Romanian and English.

Ruscanu’s analysis engages deeply with both the journal and the poetry, concluding that more than the diarist’s tumultuous past, her present is, indeed, defined by traumas whose reflection on the page conveys an overwhelming sense of suffering¹² (Ruscanu in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 74).

The American exile of academic and translator Vera Călin is addressed in an article by the volume’s coordinator, Emanuela Ilie, who offers a close reading of Călin’s memoirs through a distinctly reflective and genre-aware lens. Emanuela Ilie begins from the premise that:

As the autobiographical form is the least foreign to her creative being, the author chooses—after a long, though entirely natural, creative silence—to combine it with essayistic writing shaped by sociological, ideological, and mentalité-driven perspectives.¹³ (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 85)

This blending results in two hybrid works: *Târziu. Însemnări californiene 1986–1996* (Late: Californian Notes 1986–1996) and *Post-scriptum. Însemnări 1997–2002* (Post-scriptum: Notes 1997–2002). These volumes, read through an identity-focused lens, present a lucid, introspective account of exile as a form of painful internal displacement, in line with the tradition of confessional writing.

⁹ Original text: „Prin aceasta depășește granițele unei narațiuni individuale, asumând vocea colectivă a tuturor femeilor care i-au fost colege în detenție”.

¹⁰ Original text: „Am putea spune că e o ieșire din sine pentru a oferi voce figurilor comunitare. Annie Samuelli scrie seducător despre alteritate, despre celălalt, despre istoria generală, într-un stil romanesc, empatic și natural.”

¹¹ Original text: „Poetă a închisorilor și psalmilor”

¹² Original text: „Mai mult decât trecutul tumultuos al diaristei, prezentul ei stă, într-adevăr, sub semnul unor traume a căror oglindire în pagină denotă o suferință impresionantă”

¹³ Original text: „Cum cea mai puțin străină de ființa sa creatoare este formula scripturală autobiografică, scriitoarea alege – după o îndelungată (altminteri, cu totul firească) tăcere creatoare – să o mixeze cu eseistica de vector sociologic, ideologic și mentalitar.

In a different cultural space, that of France, Sorana Gurian's brief exile is discussed in a second article by Emanuela Ilie, following a transitional period spent in Italy and Israel. The analysis sheds light on the ambiguities that have long surrounded Gurian's complex biography and multilingual literary legacy. Her reputation was persistently shadowed by serious accusations, including criminal charges and alleged links to multiple intelligence agencies. In 1943, she was reportedly sought for involvement in the falsification of work permits, and at various points was suspected of acting as an agent for the Gestapo, as well as for British and French intelligence services. Although none of these allegations were officially substantiated, the suspicion of espionage continued to follow her, casting a long shadow over both her life and work (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 146).

Despite the uneven quality of her multilingual oeuvre, Gurian's final work, *Récit d'un combat*, translated into Romanian as *Povestea unei Lupte* [The story of a struggle], stands out as a profound meditation on illness. For Gurian, who was burdened from a young age by intense physical and emotional suffering, writing emerges not merely as therapy, but as a deeply aesthetic and ethical act. As Ilie states, it is "more than a mere palliative dictated by a dreadful biological condition [...] the act of confession through writing holds for Sorana Gurian meanings that are not only aesthetic but also ethical"¹⁴ (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 164).

Continuing her examination of illness memoirs, Emanuela Ilie turns to Florica Bațu-Ichim, a prolific writer whose career bridges social activism, journalism, and literature. Her volume *La Porțile Disperării, Începutul Speranței* [At the gates of despair, the beginning of hope] becomes the focus of Ilie's analysis, particularly for its intersection of motherhood and illness. As she observes, it is a text in which the dimension of motherhood prevails, allowing the spectre of malignancy and absolute darkness to momentarily transform into epiphanic brilliance¹⁵ (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 32).

Mariana Șora, Sanda Stolojan, and Monica Lovinescu also belong to the generation shaped by the cultural and ideological dynamics of the interwar period.

Often reductively defined through her relationship with Mihai Șora, Mariana Șora is described by Maria-Corina Dimitriu as possessing an exemplary moral and intellectual profile and a body of work that, although limited, endures through its literary quality and particularly substantial documentary component¹⁶ (Ilie et al., 2024, p. 476). Dimitriu highlights Șora's life as one marked by successive exiles and literary production—memoirs and diaries—that have not yet received sustained monographic analysis. The inclusion of an article dedicated to her in this dictionary is therefore particularly welcome.

Sanda Stolojan, a descendant of a family of writers and diplomats, emerges as one of the most prominent voices of the Parisian exile. Deeply affected by the experience of expatriation, she cultivated a prolific career encompassing journalism, political activism, literature—both translation and memoir—and diplomacy, notably serving as the official interpreter for French delegations visiting communist Romania. In her analysis, Luiza Negură underscores the documentary significance of Stolojan's memoirs, noting:

¹⁴ Original text: „Mai mult decât un simplu paliativ, impus de un context biologic îngrozitor, [...] confesiunea mediată scriptural are pentru Sorana Gurian sensuri nu numai estetice, ci și etice.”

¹⁵ Original text: „în care prevalează dimensiunea maternității, grație căreia spectrul malignității și al întunericiiului absolut se poate întoarce, măcar temporar, în strălucire epifanică”

¹⁶ Original text: „cu un profil moral și intelectual exemplar și cu o operă care, deși restrânsă, rezistă trecerii timpului prin calitatea literară și prin componenta documentară deosebit de consistentă”

Sanda Stolojan's vivid, penetrating gaze is paired with the clarity of her judgments and a cultivated refinement. A notable feature of her diaristic discourse is the creation of a gallery of emblematic cultural figures.¹⁷ (Negură in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 458)

Through her memoirs, Stolojan not only recounts her own intellectual and personal evolution, but also offers insight into the wider cultural and historical dynamics of the Romanian exile in Paris. Her reflections evoke a constellation of influential figures: Cioran, Eliade, and Ionesco, alongside the committed cultural and civic efforts of Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca. She also bears witness to a range of initiatives aimed at preserving Romanian cultural identity abroad, including L.M. Arcade's literary circle, Paul Barbăneagră's intellectual salon, and the establishment of the journal *Les Cahiers de l'Est*.

The article on Monica Lovinescu, penned by Georgeta Orian, presents a detailed biographical reconstruction, tracing the early literary impulses of a child who would later become one of the most prominent voices of the Romanian exile. It provides a meticulous analysis of her oeuvre, covering her translation work under various pseudonyms, dystopian fiction, memoirs, diaries, journalistic writings—both in print and via radio—and her editorial activity with the *Agende lovinesciene*. This study emphasises Lovinescu's dual role as both a literary critic and a dissident.

The analysis also addresses the posthumous recovery of Lovinescu's work and legacy, considering public, institutional, and editorial efforts, as well as the preserved correspondence between Ecaterina Bălăcioiu-Lovinescu and her daughter in Paris. This broader contextualisation aims to portray the many facets of a complex and often burdened personality, reflecting on the issue of an identity built in stages, under a *name* sometimes difficult to bear and one that demanded to be honoured¹⁸ (Orian in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 214).

More explicitly than in many other cases, Lovinescu's oeuvre is shown to be fundamentally shaped by exile: in the sense of a resilient nucleus that generates subsequent phases," it is "rooted in exile¹⁹ (Orian in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 215).

Furthermore, the article highlights her belonging to the generation of political exile—a group defined not only by displacement, but by a broader mission:

In her case, it is evident that she belongs to the generation of 'political exile,' which assumed, in multifaceted ways, a mission beyond personal survival or individual literary or scientific achievements [...] for Monica Lovinescu, the term 'exile' remains the most fitting, the one that best captures, both semantically and existentially, her entire Story.²⁰ (Orian in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 220).

Moreover, Orian concludes that Lovinescu's memoirs and diaries reconstruct not only a life, but multiple historical periods: two, or rather three, eras (the Romanian interwar period, the postwar totalitarian period—both within the country and abroad—and the early phase of

¹⁷ Original text: „Privirea vie, pătrunzătoare a Sandei Stolojan este dublată de luciditatea judecăților sale și de un rafinament cultivat. O primă direcție care impresionează în discursul diaristic este realizarea unei galerii de figuri emblematice ale culturii.”

¹⁸ Original text: „întrezărindu-se și problema unei identități construite în etape, sub un *nume* uneori greu de purtat și care s-a cerut onorat.”

¹⁹ Original text: „Opera Monicăi Lovinescu – în sensul de nucleu dur, generator de faze ulterioare – este cea din/de exil.”

²⁰ Original text: iar „În ceea ce o privește, e limpede că face parte din generația 'exilului politic', care și-a asumat, pluriform, o misiune, dincolo de propria supraviețuire și de propriile realizări literare sau științifice [...] în cazul Monicăi Lovinescu termenul 'exil' rămâne cel mai potrivit, cel care acoperă cel mai bine, semantic și existențial, întreaga ei Poveste.”

the post-December 1989 period), along with the nodal points, thresholds, and transitions (which are of particular interest)²¹ (Orian in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 232).

Georgeta Orian further highlights the way in which Lovinescu reconstructs her memory in diaristic form, not according to a strict chronology, but around recurring ‘themes and obsessions’, employing expansive ‘analepses and prolepses’ (Orian in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 235). Despite this non-linear structure, she retains a strong sense of self throughout her writing—keeping a constant reflective eye on her inner child, adolescent self, and the evolving ego shaped by different times and places. Journalling, in this context, becomes not only a means of figurative return—a way of coming home through memory—but also a deliberate act of revision: a way of reassembling and reinterpreting personal history from within exile.

Among the writers born during the interwar period but whose education and literary formation took place post-war are Aurora Cornu and Sanda Nițescu. Their journeys reflect a distinct phase within the Romanian exile experience, and both women present compelling biographical and creative paths.

Aurora Cornu, as discussed by Luiza Negură, began her literary career in Romania during a period marked by youthful Marxist-Leninist enthusiasm and a well-known biographical connection to Marin Preda. She later chose exile in Paris, where she pursued a dynamic career in cinema, alongside her literary work which primarily consists of poetry, and journalistic activity.

Another significant figure is Sanda Nițescu, analysed by Silviu Gongonea, who highlights her ability to adapt and gain recognition within an adopted cultural space:

Sanda Nițescu’s merit lies in her ability to adapt and establish herself through her work within a new, adopted culture. Part of her oeuvre was written directly in Baudelaire’s language, promoting the image of her homeland beyond its borders, which fully justifies considering her one of the quintessential representatives of Romanian cultural exile. Sanda Nițescu belongs, by adoption, to French culture, yet she transplants into it a way of living and understanding art that originates in her native culture.²² (Gongonea in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 380)

An internationally recognised visual artist, Sanda Nițescu is also the author of distinctive memoir volumes, which blend gastronomic and artistic reflection and frequently reflect her affinity for the bohemian cultural world of the Parisian café. Silviu Gongonea approaches these texts with evident readerly enjoyment, highlighting both their narrative charm and the aesthetic originality that defines her autobiographical voice.

As the volume’s most prolific contributor, authoring six articles, the literary critic Emanuela Ilie turns her attention to another generation of Romanian exile—women writers born after the Second World War. She provides critical readings of three prominent figures from this generation: Sanda Golopenția, Gabriela Melinescu, and Alina Diaconu.

Alina Diaconu, who left Romania at the age of fourteen after spending her early years in the repressive climate of the 1950s, settled in Argentina, where she developed a prolific literary career in Spanish. Her work encompasses novels, poetry, aphorisms, short stories,

²¹ Original text: „Lectura împreună a jurnalelor și a memorialisticii Monicăi Lovinescu recompune două, de fapt trei, epoci (interbelicul românesc, postbelicul totalitar – în țară și în afara ei, apoi perioada postdecembristă în prima ei fază), precum și punctele nodale, de prag, de trecere, acestea fiind de un interes aparte.”

²² Original text: „Meritul Sandei Nițescu este acela de a fi se adaptat și impus prin munca ei într-o cultură nouă, de adopție, o parte din opera sa fiind scrisă direct în limba lui Baudelaire, promovând imaginea țării peste granițe, ceea ce ne îndreptățește să o considerăm fără rezerve unul dintre reprezentanții exponențiali ai exilului cultural românesc. Sanda Nițescu aparține, prin adopție, culturii franceze, însă ea transplantează în cadrul acesteia un tip de trăire și înțelegere a artei care își au sursa în cultura natală.”

essays, interviews, and journalism, although only a fraction has been translated into Romanian. The analysis centred on her is particularly significant, given her relative absence from mainstream Romanian literary histories. Ilie highlights a central aspect of Diaconu's creative identity:

Her existence, fundamentally defined by three centres that shape her emotional geography (Romania, France, and Argentina), is candidly acknowledged by the novelist as being driven by a major obsession with the idea of travel and places, while being motivated by the necessity to oppose the forms of dictatorship she has encountered.²³ (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 109)

Moreover, her writing was shaped by the influence of other exiled Romanian authors, notably Eugène Ionesco and Emil Cioran, whose works resonated with her own experience of displacement and cultural negotiation.

Gabriela Melinescu, who later settled in Sweden following an early poetic career in Romania, including her well-documented relationship with Nichita Stănescu, left behind a vast and multifaceted body of work. Her contributions span poetry, fiction, memoirs, translations, and visual art, including drawings, engravings, and icon paintings. Emanuela Ilie's analysis provides a nuanced reading of this complex oeuvre, with particular attention to the recurring identity-related themes and the author's navigation across multiple languages. Writing in Romanian, Swedish, and French, Melinescu exemplifies a translanguing and transcultural literary identity.

Emanuela Ilie argues that Melinescu remains committed to the transformative potential of literature, even in its most introspective forms:

Gabriela Melinescu stubbornly continues to believe in the dual thaumaturgic and epiphanic potential of writing, even in its diaristic form [...] the direct writing of the self can serve as an essential means of accessing that transcendent(al) otherness which arises in the familiar territory of intersections between languages, cultures, and identities.²⁴ (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 276)

Although her work spans Swedish, Romanian, and French, many of her later writings were originally published in Swedish and were translated into Romanian, particularly after 1989, contributing to the re-establishment of her place within Romanian literary consciousness. Melinescu consistently demonstrated a remarkable linguistic plurivalence, which earned her critical recognition and awards in Sweden and beyond. Gabriela Melinescu passed away recently, leaving behind a body of work that stands at the intersection of languages, identities, and artistic forms. This embodies a legacy that resonates with other figures in the volume, including Sanda Golopenția, whose contributions Ilie also examines in depth.

Sanda Golopenția, who left Romania in 1980 to join her husband, ethnologist Constantin Eretescu, in the United States, has experienced a notable revival of her literary and intellectual profile since the early 2000s. Her wide-ranging body of work reflects two central dimensions: on the one hand, a scientific corpus that includes significant contributions to

²³ Original text: „Cum existența îi este fundamental definită prin raportare la trei centre care îi alcătuiesc *geografia emoțională* (România, Franța și Argentina), romanciera ne recunoaște, tranșant, că literatura pe care o scrie are ca obsesie majoră *ideea călătoriei și a locurilor*, dar este motivată de necesitatea de a se opune formelor de dictatură cunoscute.”

²⁴ Original text: „Gabriela Melinescu se încapățânează totuși să creadă în potențialul deopotrivă taumaturgic și epifanic al scrisului, fie el și diaristic [...] scriitura directă a sinelui poate funcționa ca formă esențială de acces la acea alteritate transcendent(al)ă ce ia naștere în cunoscutul teritoriu de interferență între limbi, culturi și identități.”

pragmatics, transformational grammar, sociolinguistics, poetics, cultural anthropology, and ethnomusicology; on the other, an expansive and deeply personal practice of memoir writing.

Alongside her own publications, Golopenția has also undertaken major editorial efforts to recover and disseminate the work of her parents, the ethnologist Ștefania Cristescu-Golopenția and the sociologist Anton Golopenția, both of whom were influential intellectual figures in 20th-century Romania.

From the perspective of Romanian literary history, Ilie argues that Golopenția's most significant literary contributions lie in her memoiristic writings, composed after her relocation to the United States. These texts comprise a rich array of forms: short stories with confessional undertones, diary entries, travel notes, anamnestic fragments prompted by cultural encounters, as well as reviews of literature, film, music, and art. As Ilie notes, in total, over 2,000 pages impress with their ambition (both existentially and textually), intellectual density, and elegance of expression.²⁵ (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 133)

Ilie highlights that these reflections are remarkably devoid of bitterness or resentment, a tone rarely found in exile literature. Instead, Golopenția constructs a narrative that is cohesive and emotionally balanced, shaped by ethical commitment, intellectual rigour, and critical inquiry. Her memoirs, Ilie observes, are neither nostalgic nor accusatory, but honour the complexity, resilience, and integrity of a life lived between cultures (Ilie in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 144).

In her reflections on displacement, Golopenția makes a clear and thoughtful distinction between exile and emigration, viewing them not as variations of the same experience, but as fundamentally different in cause and meaning. Exile, in her understanding, involves a rupture brought about by external forces, whether political, ideological, or historical, while emigration is typically a voluntary act, often grounded in personal or economic motivations. Despite living and writing abroad, she remained firmly anchored in the Romanian cultural sphere, continuing to write in her native language. For Golopenția, writing in Romanian was not only a form of self-preservation, but a mode of belonging: she saw her intellectual identity as deeply rooted in Romanian culture and described the Romanian language and writing itself as integral to her very existence. As Emanuela Ilie carefully highlights, Golopenția analyses the condition of exile critically, yet without harshness, drawing a nuanced distinction between the exiled and the emigrant. Moreover, she underlines the sustaining power of writing in Romanian, not only as a personal means of survival, but as a shared form of cultural resilience among Romanian writers in exile.

The American cultural space also serves as the backdrop for the exile of two lesser-known Romanian writers whose works remain relatively unfamiliar to readers in Romania. The first is the poet Alex. Amalia Călin, whose work is examined by Maria-Corina Dimitriu. Her analysis begins from the premise that the paradoxical novelty of Amalia Călin's poetry, within the context of 1990s and 2000s experiments, lies in its reconnection with a traditionalist and Orthodox strand of Romanian poetry, abandoned during the interwar period and almost insignificantly reactivated during the communist era²⁶ (Dimitriu in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 76). As Dimitriu states, for Alex. Amalia Călin, this reconnection is not merely aesthetic but deeply spiritual, anchored in an idealised past and sustained by a strong belief in divine love. Her poetry stands as a testament to the inner drama of exile: the experience of disconnection from one's origins and the longing to restore a lost sense of belonging. In this light, the revival of a

²⁵ Original text: „În total, peste 2000 de pagini, care impresionează ca proiect (deopotrivă în cheie existențială și scripturală), densitate ideatică și eleganță discursivă.”

²⁶ Original text: „Noutatea paradoxală a poeziei Amaliei Călin în contextul experimentelor nouăzeciste și douămiste vine din reconectarea cu o filieră tradiționalistă și ortodoxistă a poeziei românești, abandonată în interbelic și reactivată aproape nesemnificativ pe durata perioadei comuniste.”

marginalised religious tradition becomes a quiet act of resilience, offering continuity where displacement has fractured identity.

The second writer, whose exile occurred in the American cultural space, is Domnica Rădulescu, a novelist and academic. Her work is analysed by Alexandra Ruscanu, who emphasises how Rădulescu's position as a university professor in theatre and gender studies informs both the thematic and structural dimensions of her literary texts. As Ruscanu demonstrates, her novels focus on the entire category of women living under oppressive regimes. Following the *bildungsroman* model, they are subjected to various trials of survival [...] leading to the formation of particularly strong identities, whether feminine, artistic, or social²⁷ (Ruscanu in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 441). A strong autobiographical current runs through these narratives; her protagonists are at times inspired by parental figures, but more frequently shaped by gendered forms of marginalisation, reflecting the broader struggle of women navigating exile. For Rădulescu, exile is not only a political and cultural rupture, but also a gendered experience, one in which identity must be continuously redefined between memory, dislocation, and reinvention. Her personal encounters with marginality sharpen her insight into the dual burdens carried by women in exile. In this sense, her work contributes to a feminist literary cartography of exile, where personal history, gendered trauma, and social critique converge.

The final two studies in the volume are authored by the literary critic Marius Miheţ and focus on Herta Müller and Aglaja Veteranyi; an association the author describes as far from coincidental, since constructed between paradoxical walls, Herta and Aglaja remain *twins with distinct voices*²⁸ (Miheţ in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 544). These two figures, emblematic of exile's linguistic rupture and existential dislocation, are examined through both their biographical journeys and their stylistic particularities.

Miheţ's study of Herta Müller begins with a meticulous tracing of her life and dissent, especially in relation to her status as an ethnic German from the Banat region and her departure from Romania in 1987. Alongside detailed textual analysis, the critic directly addresses the discomfort surrounding Müller's reception in Romanian literary culture. He remarks that the absence of any new Romanian translations of her work for nearly a decade signals not only a lack of public engagement, but also a failure of editorial will to meet the author's high ethical and linguistic standards. He notes, too, the almost complete silence around the celebration of her seventieth birthday within Romanian intellectual circles. Uncompromising, incisive, and incorrigible, Herta Müller rejects any editorial, translational, or human impurity as a sign of ethical disapproval toward the country she conditionally loves²⁹ (Miheţ in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 296).

Miheţ also critiques the way Romanian culture has historically positioned Müller and her contemporaries, including Richard Wagner, Rolf Bossert, Johann Lippert, and Dieter Schlesak, as part of a marginalised category of exile literature, rather than acknowledging them as contributors to Romania's German-language literary heritage. Before Müller's Nobel Prize win in 2009, her work was largely overlooked, and when addressed, often reduced to sentimental or superficial interpretations. Even following her international recognition, the critical discourse, as Miheţ observes, remained largely repetitive, lacking deeper conceptual innovation. Her prose, with its language that seems to ignite at the very root of every word³⁰

²⁷ Original text: „întreaga categorie a femeilor aflate în condițiile unui regim opresiv. Pe tiparul de *bildungsroman*, sunt supuse la diferite probe de supraviețuire [...] formarea unei identități (feminine, artistice ori sociale) deosebit de puternice.”

²⁸ Original text: „Construite între ziduri paradoxale, Herta și Aglaja au rămas *gemene cu voci distincte*.”

²⁹ Original text: „Incomodă, incisivă și incorigibilă, Herta Müller respinge orice impuritate editorială, traductologică sau umană ca semn al nedeprecierii etice față cu țara pe care o iubește condiționat.”

³⁰ Original text: „limbajului care arde parcă la rădăcina fiecărui cuvânt.”

(Miheț in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 308), continues to resist simplification and remains accessible primarily to a small, highly specialised readership. The challenges of reading Müller lie not only in her political or thematic content, but in the radical poetics of exile she performs—a linguistic fragmentation that mirrors cultural and psychological dislocation.

The second study by Marius Miheț, focusing on Aglaja Veteranyi, explores a distinct yet comparably intense life and creative path. Her departure from Romania at the age of five—the moment of separation haunts her entire life, causing linguistic and identity traumas—marks the beginning of a life shaped by the itinerant, borderless world of the circus, her family's profession. Recognition of her literary significance in Romania came only posthumously, following a delayed yet growing interest in her experimental work. As Miheț recounts,

starting in 2001, her depression deepens and seems unstoppable. Her crises intensify. In early summer, she finds the strength to return to Romania. She visits Maramureș. The 'Merry Cemetery' irresistibly draws her. Just as the Romanian edition of her novel is about to be published, in February 2002, the writer takes her own life in Lake Zürich.³¹ (Miheț in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 534).

Alongside his analysis of her prose and poetry, Miheț also explores the stage adaptations of Veteranyi's work, particularly her acclaimed novel *Warum das Kind in der Polenta kocht / Why the Child Is Cooking in the Polenta / De ce Fierbe Copilul în Mămăligă*. He highlights her uniqueness as an artist whose linguistic plurality and performative experience defined her creative output. The strangeness of Aglaja Veteranyi was also the hallmark of her genius,³² he writes, noting her fluency in Romanian and Spanish, her later acquisition of Swiss German, and her dual identity as both performer and educator (Miheț in Ilie et al., 2024, p. 536). Veteranyi's work, rooted in trauma, multilingualism, and theatricality, articulates a poetics of restlessness, a form of exile that transcends geographic displacement and becomes embedded in the very texture of her artistic expression.

The twenty-three studies in literary history and criticism gathered in *Un Dicționar al Exilului Feminin Românesc: Autoare Emblematic, Volume Reprezentative* offer a compelling and often poignant reading experience. They appeal to both literary scholars and general readers interested in the literature of Romanian women in exile. Each entry features a carefully constructed biographical narrative, rigorous close reading, and a selected bibliography—making the dictionary a valuable bibliographic and analytical resource. While the contributors were given flexibility in structure and focus, the selection of the twenty-three authors appears to rest on several implicit criteria: literary merit, biographical relevance to the Romanian exile experience, and cultural visibility—whether already established or in need of recovery. Despite their generational, geographical, and stylistic diversity, these writers are united by the way exile shaped their creative output, identity, and reception. Most share a commitment to autobiographical or testimonial forms—memoirs, diaries, essays—that explore displacement, cultural hybridity, and the struggle to maintain linguistic and personal continuity. As such, the volume constructs a collective narrative of Romanian women's exile that is as much about literary production as it is about survival, remembrance, and transnational belonging.

One of the volume's notable strengths lies in its openness of form. Some studies prioritise literary analysis, while others foreground historical context, exile narratives, or identity formation. Although the volume does not present an explicit theoretical framework,

³¹ Original text: „Începând cu 2001, depresia ei înaintază și pare de neoprit. Crizele se intensifică. La începutul verii, găsește resurse să revină în România. Vizitează Maramureșul. 'Cimitirul vesel' o atrage irezistibil. Chiar când ediția românească a romanului ei stă să apară, în februarie 2002, scriitoarea se sinucide în lacul Zürich.”

³² Original text: „Stranietatea Aglajei Veteranyi era totodată marca genialității ei.”

many contributions draw—implicitly or overtly—on feminist criticism, trauma theory, memory studies, and exile theory. These approaches converge in a shared emphasis on affective memory, ethical responsibility, and the re-inscription of marginalised voices into the cultural archive. It is also important to emphasise that, although many of the authors included in this volume remain little known or overlooked within the Romanian literary canon, they were often fully recognised in their adoptive cultural spaces. Their work was valued, translated, awarded, and woven into the literary fabric of their host countries. The act of reclaiming these writers and acknowledging their cultural contributions and forms of resistance represents, not only a scholarly correction, but a necessary gesture of cultural reparation—one that restores their place in Romanian literary history and honours the acts of resilience and dissent that shaped their creative lives. This foundational work also creates space for further scholarship and outreach, particularly in light of the fact that the critical approach adopted here could be extended to include additional authors and perspectives. Such efforts would continue the essential endeavour of reintegrating Romanian women writers in exile into the national literary consciousness, making their works more accessible for future translations, reprints, and critical analysis.

References:

- Ilie, E. (Ed.). (2024). *Un dicționar al exilului feminin românesc: Autoare emblematice, volume representative* [A dictionary of Romanian women writers' literary exile: Emblematic authors, representative works]. Bucharest: Eikon Publishing House.
- Popa, M. (2023). La o sută de ani de la naștere: Eugenia Mureșanu-Adam, poetă a închisorilor și a psalmilor. *TABOR. Revistă de cultură și spiritualitate românească*, 17(6), 41–45.

Contributors

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1810-8485>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/NCV-0437-2025>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57706729300>

Simona Ailenii, PhD, is a Lecturer (UK) in Romance Linguistics at *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iași, Romania. She received a PhD in Philology in 2013 from *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iași, Romania and University of Porto, Portugal (joint thesis supervision).

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1688-2557>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/GSE-3807-2022>

Diana Alexandra Avram (Șandru) is a Ph.D. student at the Doctoral School of Philology, *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia. She is currently working on her doctoral thesis entitled *A World of Words: Dystopian Power through Language*. She teaches seminars in English Language and Romanian as a Foreign Language at the Faculty of History, Letters, and Educational Sciences. She holds a BA in Romanian and English Language and Literature, as well as an MA in English Language, Literature, and Culture in the European Context, both obtained at *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia.

Her research interests lie at the intersection of linguistics, literature, and language education. She focuses on areas such as discourse analysis, paremiology, and translation studies, with a particular interest in the use of language as a tool of power. She is also passionate about teaching Romanian and English in intercultural and multilingual contexts.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9609-2573>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/LVS-5290-2024>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57248641000>

Gabriel Dan Bărbuleț was born in 1974 in Blaj, a town located in Alba County, Romania. He demonstrated an early passion for languages and literature and pursued his higher education at *Babes-Bolyai* University in Cluj-Napoca. Here, he majored in English language and literature and minored in Romanian language and literature. His academic education did not stop at his undergraduate studies; he earned a Ph.D. in Philology from the same university. His doctoral dissertation, titled *Movie Talk: A Study of Slang in Prison Movies*, reflects his interest in the intersection of language, culture, and media. Currently, Gabriel Dan Bărbuleț serves as an Associate Professor at *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia in Romania. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he holds the administrative role of Dean of the Faculty of History, Letters, and Educational Sciences. His scholarly interests are broad and diverse, encompassing Pragmatics, Semantics, English Syntax, English Methodology, and British and American Culture and Civilization. His wide-ranging expertise is reflected in his numerous publications in national and international journals and his active participation in various conferences.

Bărbuleț is also a key member of several editorial boards for peer-reviewed journals. His contributions include work with international and domestic publications such as *The Journal of Linguistic and Intercultural Education - JoLie*, *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, *Incursiuni in Imaginar*, *Buletinul studentilor si masteranzilor filologi*, and *Current and Future Perspectives on Teaching and Learning*. These roles underscore his commitment to advancing scholarly communication and his dedication to fostering academic discourse across various linguistic and cultural fields.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8588-8528>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/IXW-6007-2023>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=33667451800>

Lucian Vasile Băgiu, PhD, Habil is a Senior lecturer (UK) / Associate professor (US) in Romanian and comparative literature at *1 Decembrie 1918* University of Alba Iulia, Romania and has been the journal manager of the *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies*, Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, since October 2016. He received a Ph.D. in Philology (Romanian literature) *magna cum laude* in 2006 from *Babes-Bolyai* University, Cluj-Napoca. He became a member of the Romanian

Writers' Union in the same year. He has also occupied the position of lecturer of Romanian language at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (2008-2011), Charles University in Prague (2012-2013), Lund University (2014-2017), and of tenured Senior Lecturer in Romanian Studies at Lund University (2020-2022). He is the author of several books on literary criticism, fiction, and language.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2440-2193>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/NBW-6377-2025>

Emmanuel Blaise Tapon is a PhD student in Translation Studies at Université Laval. He works on the translation of children's literature into minority African languages. With 17 years of professional translation experience, Emmanuel holds a master's degree in the field of Translation from the University of Buea and a master's degree in the field of International Relations from the University of Yaoundé II (Cameroon). His career includes positions as a Senior Translator at Cameroon's Ministry of Communication (2013-2023) and part-time lecturer of Translation at the University of Yaoundé I. He has also worked as a freelance translator since 2008, providing expert translation services across various domains. Emmanuel is a certified translator and member of both OTTIAQ (Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec) and APTIC (Association of Professional Translations and Interpreters of Cameroon).

Currently serving as a Teaching and Research Assistant at Université Laval with the Department of Languages, Linguistics and Translation and Canada Research Chair in Translation, Technologies and Society, his research interests include postcolonial translation, translation technologies, and the role of translation in preserving endangered languages. Emmanuel's published work includes *The Freelance Translator's Companion: 15 Keys to Building a Successful Career and Living One's Dream*.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4544-410X>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/C-7457-2017>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57217030080>

Gabriela Chiciudean, Associate Professor, PhD in Philology since 2005, teaches Theory of Literature, Literary Criticism, Introduction in the Science of Imaginary, Comparative Literature. She is the author of some individual volumes (*Incursiuni în lumea simbolurilor*, Sibiu, Imago Publishing House, 2004; *Pavel Dan și globul de cristal al creatorului*, The Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2007; *Obiectiv/ Subiectiv. Încercări de stabilizare a fluidului*, Tipomoldova Publishing House, 2013; *Studii literare. Abordări pe suportul Științei imaginărilor*, The Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2016), and the co-author and coordinator of a few other volumes. She published many articles and studies in dedicated periodicals in Romania and abroad. She is the executive manager of Speculum Centre for the Study of Imaginary, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia. She is the organizer of Speculum Conferences and the editor of *Incursiuni în Imaginar*, the literary journal of Speculum Conferences, and editor of the *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies*, Lund, Sweden.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6898-2459>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=55573576500>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/AAR-8089-2021>

Ela Cosma, PhD Habil, is a senior researcher I at the Romanian Academy, George Barițiu Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca. In 2000 she received her first PhD *magna cum laude* in Philology, specialization in Folklore, from the Faculty of Philology of the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, with a doctoral paper on *Foundation in the Romanian Folk Culture* (published in 2000). In 2012 she received her second PhD *summa cum laude* in History, specialization Modern History, at George Barițiu Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca, with the doctoral thesis *The 1848 Revolutions and the Habsburg Consular Agencies in the Danubian Principalities (Moldavia, Wallachia, Serbia)* (published in 2 volumes in Romanian, 2012-2013, and English, 2015-2016). Her habilitation thesis, delivered in 2024 at the Romanian Academy, George Barițiu Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca, will be published soon under the title *Palaeography and Critical Editing of Documents. The Institute of History in Cluj, 1920-2024*. In fact, all of her published 13 monographs and 24 editions are based on

the critical editing of ethno-historical sources using multiple languages and writings. Her latest studies of ethnohistory and legal history are dedicated especially to the customary law *Jus Valachicum* in Central and Eastern Europe during medieval, early modern and modern history.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6050-9453>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/IAP-0821-2023>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=55659028000>

Dr. habil. Marius-Mircea Crișan (PhD 2008 University of Turin, Italy) is a Professor at the Teacher Training Department, West University of Timișoara. He is the editor of *Dracula: An International Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature 2017), coordinator of the special issue of *Biblioteca Nova Bulletin* "Speculative Fiction and the Frontiers of the Possible" (2019), author of *The Birth of the Dracula Myth: Bram Stoker's Transylvania* (2013) and *The Impact of a Myth: Dracula and the Fictional Representation of the Romanian Space* (2013), and co-editor of the volume *Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture: Cultural Determinants and Education* (2017). He was the manager of the research project *The Impact of a Myth: Dracula and the Image of Romania in British and American Literatures* (2011-2013).

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5074-5228>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/K-4639-2013>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57194623783>

UEFISCDI ID (UEF-ID): U-1700-039C-8022

Daniel Dejica, PhD, habil., Professor in the Department of Communication and Foreign Languages and Dean of the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Politehnica University Timișoara. PhD supervisor, affiliated to the Doctoral School of Humanities, West University of Timișoara. Director of the Center for Advanced Translation Studies (PoliCAT) within Politehnica University Timișoara. His didactic and research interests include translation, discourse analysis, and intercultural and interlinguistic communication. He was part of the Doctoral Studies Committee of the European Society for Translation Studies (2009-2018). He coordinates the Translation Studies book series within the Politehnica Publishing House, the Professional Communication and Translation Studies international conference, and is part of the editorial of scientific boards of numerous scientific journals. Together with Muguraș Constantinescu and Titela Vîlceanu, he coordinates *A History of Translations in Romanian*, a series of volumes published by the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy. Personal website: <https://sites.google.com/view/daniel-dejica/> ; E-mail: daniel.dejica@upt.ro

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3852-0906>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/MXL-1943-2025>

Gabriela-Marinela Hlușcu is a PhD Student at West University of Timișoara. She is an English teacher in Lugoj, Timiș, and a freelance translator in English and Italian. She has translated four books so far and has been a member of the Ion Vidu Choir in Lugoj since 2004.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7264-7610>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/KLZ-5770-2024>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=56992784600>

Laïth Ibrahim is an Associate Professor of French Literature at *Mutah* University in Jordan and Assistant to the Dean of the Decanate of Scientific Research at the same institution. He holds a bachelor's degree in European Languages from *Mutah* University, a master's degree in French Literature from *Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah* University (Morocco), a master's degree in Linguistic Sciences from *Cergy-Pontoise* University (France), and a Ph.D. in French Literature and Civilization from *Sorbonne* University. A member of several international scientific committees, he has served on the jury for the Goncourt Prize of the Orient since 2019. His research focuses on the role of fiction in various fields, including anthropology, philosophy, argumentation, sociology, and politics, particularly in relation to identity and utopian thought. He is the author of *Naissance de l'individu et émergence du roman de formation : la contribution des années 1730 en France* (L'Harmattan, 2020)

and *Utopie et théâtre : d'une idée évasive à la concrétisation effective dans L'Île des esclaves, L'Île de la Raison et La Colonie de Marivaux* (Éditions Universités Européennes, 2013).

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5764-8612>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/GYV-5527-2022>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=55582137800>

Arleen Ionescu, PhD, Habil is a Senior Researcher (Cercetător științific 1) at West University of Timișoara. Her work on James Joyce and related aspects of modernism, as well as on various aspects of historical trauma, memory studies and Holocaust studies, has appeared in *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Journal of Modern Literature*, *Memory Studies*, *Oxford Literary Review*, *Parallax*, *Paragraph*, *Partial Answers*, and *Style*. She is a joint Editor-in-Chief of *Word and Text*. Her books include *Romanian Joyce: From Hostility to Hospitality* (2014) and *The Memorial Ethics of Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum* (2017). She co-edited (with Maria Margaroni) *Arts of Healing: Cultural Narratives of Trauma* (2020) and a co-edited issue (with Simona Mitroiu) on *Holocaust Narratives in the Post-testimonial Era* (*Parallax*, 2023). At present, she is finishing a monograph on several Jewish refugees who fled to Shanghai during WW2. (arleen.ionescu@e-uvt.ro)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1986-3778>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/IAO-2743-2023>

Laura Lazăr Zăvăleanu, from the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, is a specialist in ancient and premodern Romanian literature, author and co-author of several volumes, studies and articles analyzing premodern literature and culture from the perspective of literary history and images, the history of ideas and mentalities and the history of sensitivity and emotions, as well as the relationship between literary text and iconographic representations, published in Romania or abroad. Latest published volume: *Locul unde odihnește cerul, Timpul și spațiul în literatura română veche/ The Place where the Sky rests. Time and Space in the Ancient Romanian Literature*, Pro Universitaria Publishing House, Bucharest, 2023

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8495-9558>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/NCS-1231-2025>

Elena Meștereagă, received her PhD from the Doctoral School of Humanities, West University of Timișoara, in 2019. She teaches English at *Nicolaus Olahus* Technological High School in Orăștie. Her primary research areas are linguistics and teaching English as a Foreign Language. Dr. Meștereagă is the author of *The Role of out-of-class contexts in EFL Learning* (2021). She has contributed to various studies and articles, including *Use of English as a Social Identity Marker in Romania: Promoting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) 2017*, *Out-of-class Use of English and EFL Learning in Romania 2017*, *Integrating the Social Context and Learning Ecologies of Digital Natives in EFL Teaching Approaches 2019*. With over 17 years of experience teaching English to students from the first grade to high school, she has extensive expertise in EFL pedagogy and research. E-mail: elena.mestereaga@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5621-7354>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/ABG-4212-2021>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57502195200>

Cristina Mirela Nicolaescu, from Romania, holds a Professor position in the Department of Western Languages at *Yozgat-Bozok* University, Turkey. She received a PhD in 2013 in Postmodern Fiction (American and Canadian literature) from the University of Bucharest, Romania. The research findings in linguistics and English Literature have been presented at international conferences and symposia, some of them published as academic articles in journals. She authored a few books, among which are *ENGLISH-TURKISH DICTIONARY of IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS and other PHRASES for literary translations* (Blackswan Publishing Press, 2021) and *Technologies of Perspective on Contemporary Literary Texts*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, UK, 2022.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6306-2781>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/GRS-7701-2022>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=59143489200>

Maria Szikszai, PhD, is an anthropologist and a faculty member at the Department of Hungarian Ethnography and Anthropology, *Babes-Bolyai University* of Cluj-Napoca. Her research areas encompass the Anthropology of Art, Sacred Art, the study of Swabians in Satu Mare, Romania, Anthropology of Writing, and more recently, Digital Culture. As part of her academic work, she has published seven books as a single author, most recently a book with Lexington Books in the United States (*Community Networks and Cultural Practices in Twentieth-Century Romania. Paper-Based Cultures in the Writings of a Catholic Priest*. Lexington Books, Lanham – Boulder – New York – London, 2023). She is also the editor and co-editor of 16 books and has published more than 30 studies in national and international journals and collective volumes.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7200-0761>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/AAS-6218-2020>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=37116033900>

Dumitru Tucan is a professor in the Department of Romanian and Classical Studies at the West University of Timișoara. He specializes in Literary Theory and Cultural Studies. His recent research focuses on the culture and artifacts of 20th-century totalitarian regimes, particularly the cultural memory of the Holocaust and the Gulag in Eastern Europe. He is a contributor to the volume *Panorama postcomunismului în România (Panorama of Post-Communism in Romania, 2022)*.

His most recent works include *Dostoevsky and Gulag Literature* (2021), *Recuperarea istoriei traumatice și jocurile memoriei. Despre memoria Holocaustului din România (Recovering Traumatic History and the Games of Memory: On the Memory of the Holocaust in Romania, 2020)*, *The Diary as Survival: Dehumanization, Death, and Suffering in the Holocaust Diaries of Children and Teenagers* (2021), and *Calea spre genocid. Antisemitismul european. Antisemitismul românesc (The Path to Genocide: European Antisemitism. Romanian Antisemitism, 2024)*, co-authored.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5334-4741>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/MGA-8872-2025>

Dr. Attila Varga holds a PhD in History. He is a researcher at the Romanian Academy, *George Barițiu Institute of History* in Cluj-Napoca and an associate researcher at Oxford Brookes University (UK). His doctoral thesis focused on the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church, the state and Freemasonry in Banat and Hungary in the second half of the 19th century. He has written a number of books and studies on the history of elites in Banat, Transylvania and Central and Eastern Europe. Subsequently, his scientific activity focused on interdisciplinary research on topics of great interest, such as the history of freemasonry and secret societies in Romania, Hungary and Sweden, eugenics in Central and Northern Europe, film history, the history of computer science and nuclear energy, the transfer of computer and nuclear technology in communist Romania.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0814-1505>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=55543050800>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/NDR-9736-2025>

Victor V. Vizauer, PhD, is a researcher at the Romanian Academy, *George Barițiu Institute of History* in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (since 2014). He received his PhD in History and Archaeology in 2008 from *Babeș-Bolyai University*, Cluj-Napoca. His research interests focus on habitat, economy, and onomastics (anthroponymy and toponymy) in medieval and early modern Transylvania, *Ius Valachicum* (the laws and customs of the Vlachs/Romanians), as well as the political and diplomatic implications of the formation of the Principality of Transylvania.